

HOLIDAY NUMBER
SMITH'S

MAGAZINE

JAN. 1920 - 20 CTS.



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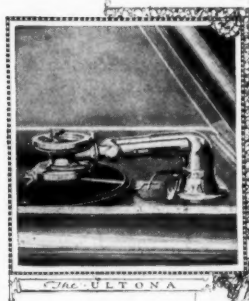
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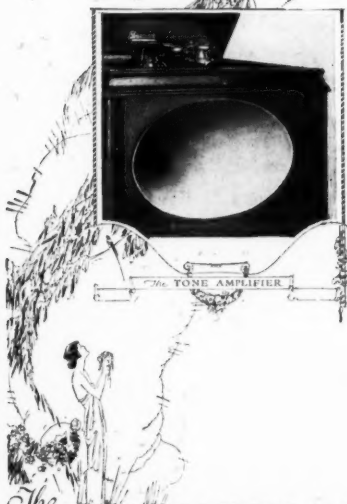
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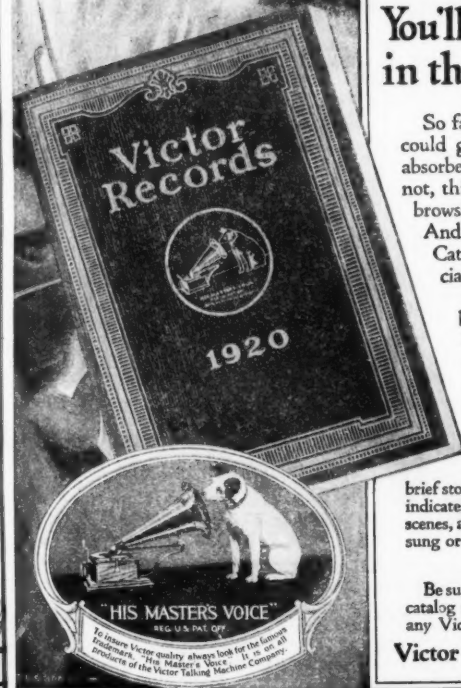
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NOTICE! Owing to labor difficulties, during which our entire plant was shut down, it will be necessary to issue SMITH'S MAGAZINE more frequently than monthly, in order to make up for lost time. Therefore, for the next few issues, it would be well for our readers to watch the news stands so that they may get each new number of SMITH'S upon its first appearance.

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No. 4

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

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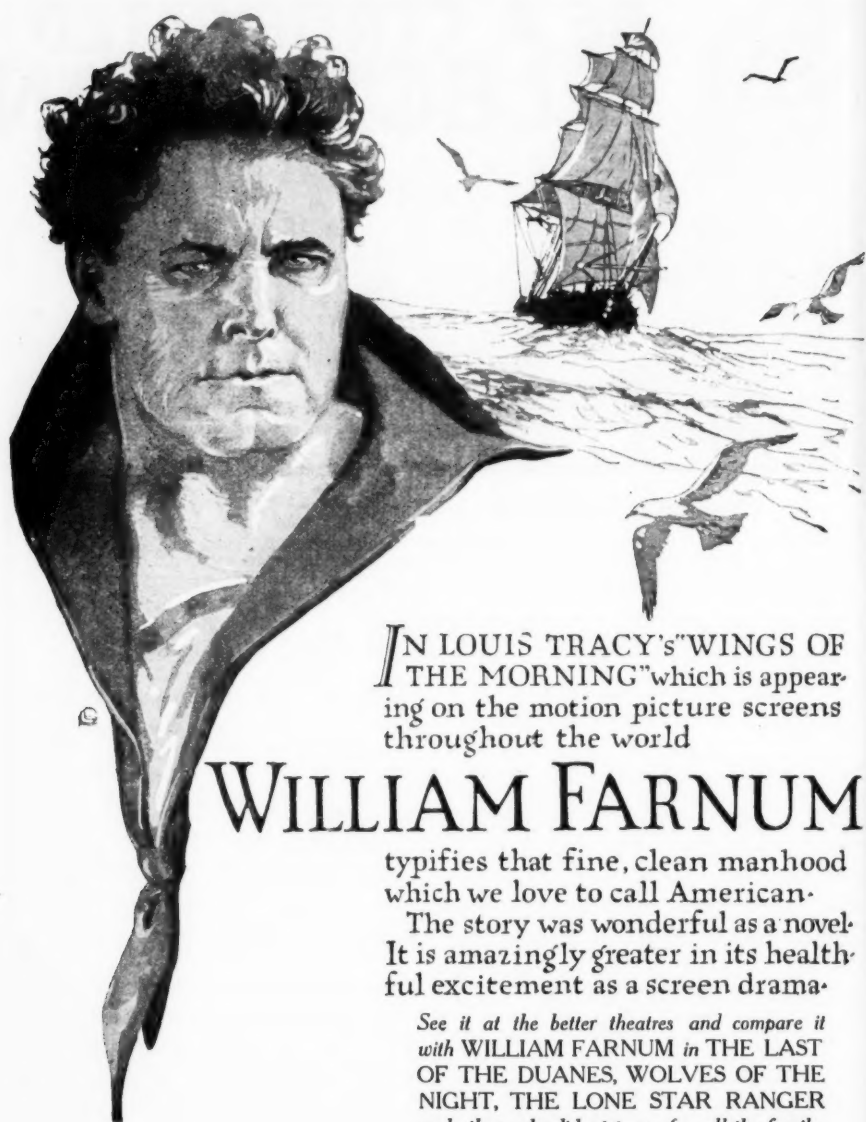
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SMITH'S MAGAZINE

Volume 30

JANUARY, 1920

Number 4

David's Story

By Arthur Crabb

Author of "Eyes," "The Girl from Hibbsville," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

Fiction or truth—which is stranger? In David Mott's case, part of his life, at least, coincided with the story he had written. Here is a story with a new turn to it.

DAVID MOTT was famous at twenty-two, having been the outstanding figure in a football victory of Harvard over Yale. Fortunately, he understood that his fame was of the fleeting variety and did not take it seriously. On the Sunday after the game, he went to Brookline with Arthur Coxe for tea and supper afterward, at the house of a friend.

David got a good deal of amusement out of the way people treated him. He had been a hero before, and had received everything from adulation and frank admiration from enthusiasts, to cold disdain by those who refused to look seriously on college football. Edith Coale seemed to be one of the latter. There were a dozen other people at the house, and Edith was not important, but she showed David clearly that if he was looking for any hero worship from her, he would be disappointed. Perhaps the fact that she was engaged to a slender, effeminate young man who surely was no athlete, and who was always beside her, had something to do with it.

She was very pretty, very quiet, and apparently indifferent to things generally, including even her slender young

man. If she had behaved like a normal young woman, David would have forgotten her; as it was, he remembered her in an indefinite sort of way.

She was a cousin of Arthur's, on his mother's side of the house.

Five years later, David put on his best clothes and went to dinner at Arthur Coxe's, in Alden. There were two men in uniform at the Coxe door, and there were champagne and similar trimmings for dinner, the opera afterward, and supper after that. David took Edith Coale in to dinner, and sat beside her at the theater. Back in the Coxe house, at supper, he sat across the table from her.

She was small, bright-eyed, and vivacious. Her engagement had been broken long before. She wore a childish, blue dress, notable by comparison with the gowns of the other women. Her eyes sparkled, her wit flowed in a steady stream, she was gay and light-hearted, and extremely friendly to David. She had had a short story accepted, she told him, and life in general was delicious. It was a very serious story. David, too, wrote stories, and even if they were far from being seri-

ous, they formed a bond with Miss Coale. David remembered her distinctly this time, and especially that she was very small.

Two years later, on a very hot summer day, David, on his way to his club, was walking up Orchard Street, in Alden. The town was dead, a few bachelors, permanent or temporary, being its only inhabitants as far as David was concerned. Just before he reached Main Street, he saw a woman coming toward him. He did not recognize her, but he saw that she was in distress, for she was staggering rather than walking. He stepped up to her quickly, and caught her just as she seemed about to fall.

It was no wonder that he had not recognized Edith Coale. She was very pale and haggard, her eyes were dull, and her clothing nothing to brag about.

"Will you help me home?" she stammered.

David was in luck, for a wandering cabman saw him and came to his rescue. In the cab, Edith Coale made no attempt to keep up the fight, but collapsed. For a block or two, David's eyes wandered along the sidewalks looking for men he knew, but soon deciding that he could stand a little joshing if it came, he forgot outsiders.

The girl, with some effort, had given him her address, and the cab stopped before the three-story house. She seemed to regain her strength when the time came to walk up the stone steps. David opened the door with the key which she told him to take from her pocketbook. It was an old, dingy, dark house. Miss Coale started for the stairs, gave it up, and David carried her to the third-floor front. As he entered it, he saw neither a bed nor a comfortable chair. Against the wall, near the door, was a couch covered with newspapers, and on it and on the papers he laid the girl.

That much done, David was at his wit's end. At first, the only thing he could think of was to find a woman to take care of her, but he had not seen signs of any in the house, and he didn't know where to go for one. Besides, he couldn't very well leave her alone in the condition she was in. Then he thought of a doctor, and decided to ask her who her doctor was. But Edith was apparently asleep, so he did nothing but stand and look at her. Don't laugh—any poor, ignorant man who didn't know anything at all about female wrecks would have done exactly as he did.

After some minutes, she opened her eyes, and David spoke of the doctor.

"I don't want one," she said.

"But something's got to be done! You're not well. Can't I get some of your friends?"

"I haven't any friends. Won't you take these things away?" She indicated the papers she was lying on. She did nothing toward helping him, but where strength only was required, David was at home, and he lifted her and pulled the papers from under her.

"A pillow," she muttered.

David looked blankly around for a pillow and didn't see any. She pointed to a corner of the room, and behind a screen he found two of them and put them under her head. Then he spoke again about women friends and the doctor.

"I'm all right," she said. "I'm just tired. It's been terribly hot for so long, and I haven't had any lunch."

"What!"

"No, I—I——" She covered her face with her hands. She didn't cry.

Here was another problem for David; how to feed a woman when there was nothing to feed her with. He looked about the room, and saw a small gas stove on the window sill. There were some shelves near it, and behind their forlorn curtains he found a box of

crackers and a bottle labeled "Port." Examination showed that it *was* port, and he gave her some of it and some of the crackers—there wasn't anything else to give her. As she ate them, David began to understand the situation.

"You stay here while I go and get you some real food," he said.

Ten minutes later he came back with a basket full of cold chicken, bread and butter, potato salad, two bottles of milk, two cans of soup, and a lot more material from a delicatessen store. He found a saucepan and put it on the gas stove on the window sill, poured a can of soup into it, and struck a match.

The window was open, and the flimsy, cotton curtains were fluttering about. It would never do to light the gas till the curtains were out of the way and there was no way of holding them back. There were plenty of signs of cooking about. The girl saw his dilemma.

"It's all right," she said, "they don't catch on fire."

"But they will, sure as fate, some day," he said, and standing on a chair he hitched them out of danger over the rod that carried them. Then he prepared their evening meal—his, too, because it was past dinner time, and he might as well eat there. Also, her immediate future was unsettled.

The food apparently did all that a doctor could have done; she seemed perfectly well after dinner. She asked what time it was, and he told her.

"I've got to hurry," she said.

"For what, to where?"

"Oh, I'm in the chorus of a show," she answered.

"What?"

"Oh, yes, I know, it's an awful thing to do, and all that sort of talk, but I had to do something—to help out."

"And you really mean that you intend to go out to-night, in your condition, and work in a hot theater, and get back here along about midnight?"

"Of course; why not?"

"I'll tell you why not, just plain because I'm not going to let you. I've elected myself your guardian for to-night and maybe for after that, and that goes."

She laughed at him, half-heartedly.

"That's all very well, but I've got to go."

Suppose she did insist on going, what could David do about it—start a rough-and-tumble fight? He chose another tack.

"Look here, Miss Coale, you and I haven't been awfully chummy during the half dozen years we've known each other, but I've been pretty friendly with your family—I mean the Coxes, of course—and they've been awfully good to me. It looks to me as though there were something wrong somewhere; as though everything were wrong for you. Why don't you tell me all about it, and maybe I can help. What are you doing here, in this house, and"—David had a sudden inspiration—"why didn't you have any lunch to-day, and why were you walking here to-night instead of coming in a street car?"

Edith smiled at him, and shrugged her shoulders. "I'm working in Alden and this is as good a place to live as any. I didn't feel hungry at lunch time, and besides, I was too busy, and—"

"You walked in the cool of the evening because you like the exercise—is that it?"

"Yes, I guess that was it."

"We both know perfectly well that wasn't it. Are you going to tell me the truth?"

She turned away from him without answering and stood before the window. "Don't you think you'd better tell me?" he asked.

She broke down and cried so suddenly that David was taken by surprise. She threw herself on the couch and sobbed. It did not last long. She sat up and brushed the tears away.

"I'm a fool to-night," she blurted



She came behind David and read over his shoulder. "You're awfully sweet, Davy," she whispered.

out, "a perfect fool! I'm tired, and I got discouraged, and everything seemed to go to pieces."

"Exactly, but you haven't told me your troubles. Why don't you?"

"I came to Alden to earn my own living, and I haven't done it."

"Why on earth should the niece of Arthur Coxe, senior, have to earn her own living? And if for some reason, impossible to guess, she does have to, why should she be trying to do it in such a pathetic manner?"

"Hasn't Arthur told you what happened?"

"No, I haven't seen Arthur for nearly a year. I've been away, you know."

"I thought everybody knew. Mother died two years ago, and this spring father married our cook, a young girl who was with us before mother died. Of course, I left him; I came here and got a job writing for the *Sunday News*."

"And you won't let any of your family help you?"

"I won't touch a penny of father's."

"How about the Coxes?"

"Aunt Helen has no money; it's all Uncle Arthur's, and I won't be a sponge-in-law." She smiled at the term.

"And you're broke, stony broke?"

"Yes, I am. I didn't have money to buy lunch, or money for carfare to-night."

She broke down under the confession, and cried again.

"Isn't the *News* work a success?"

"I'm a space writer, and I get almost nothing; that's why I went into the chorus." It was almost all sobs. David thought that a chorus in the summer, in Alden, would make any one sob.

Edith Coale was nearly hysterical. One moment she was cheerful and enthusiastic, the next in the depths of despair. She had thought that she had the fire of genius in her and that it was perfectly natural and appropriate for

her to expect success, but the short-story writing had petered out. To David the whole situation was as ridiculous as it was sad, a sort of private melodrama.

But he couldn't let Arthur Coxe's cousin starve. Arthur Coxe and all the other Coxes were far beyond reach, in the Canadian woods, and would not be in Alden for two months. If Arthur's cousin had been old or very young or very homely, or a man, or anything except a very beautiful young woman, it would have been simple enough, but with Edith Coale, as she was, it was not so simple. But she *was* Arthur's cousin and Arthur was David's best friend. David told her that she must let him help her. She chose to look upon his suggestion as the most wonderful kindness, but she flatly refused his offer. Then, to save his feelings from being hurt, she held one of his hands in both of hers, patting it gently and smiling at him, her eyes explaining that he was the nicest, most generous, sweetest, and dearest man in the world.

That night David argued with her; went out and got eggs, coffee, bread, breakfast food, and more milk; argued some more, and finally made her promise to take dinner with him the next night.

David, on the way home, thought it was the queerest mess he had ever come across. It got queerer as time went on; it was the beginning of a very curious two months.

Somewhere within those two months David came very near asking Edith Coale to marry him, and didn't.

With a sigh of resignation she had withdrawn her refusal to let him help her and night after night he took her to dinner, either in Alden or in the country around it, and he took good care that she ate a lot of wholesome food. He provided the makings of her breakfasts, and he put his foot down on the chorus business. He studied her stories and

believed down in the bottom of his heart that she would never make a success of writing. He took two or three of the best of them to some of his editor friends, and they shook their heads at each other. Finally, in the hot, third-story room, with his sleeves rolled up and his soft shirt unbuttoned at the neck, he rehashed them with her, cutting out a lot of highflown stuff and keeping to the point.

It seemed as though they were alone in the big house, for David never saw any other roomers in it and there was never a sound. A slovenly maid answered his ring at the front door and asked no questions. The corner behind the screen in Edith's room was a thousand miles away from the rest of it, as far as David and she were concerned. When he knocked, he was never told to wait outside, but often had to wait within, before she emerged from behind the screen, but that did not prevent conversation in the meantime.

She was not nearly as small as she had seemed to David at the Coxe's dinner, and she gave every indication of plenty of bodily strength. Her skin was wonderfully smooth, soft, and white, her hair was black, and her eyes very dark. Her mouth showed strength of character and the fascinating weakness of adorable femininity. Her figure, with its broad shoulders, full bust, and gentle curving hips, was close to perfection in David's eyes, and when she came from behind the screen clad for work on a hot night, and said, "You don't mind, Davy—it's so much more comfortable," David certainly did not mind.

She was very bright and had a very pleasant way of saying things, and a smile that said things much more pleasantly than any words possibly could. Under David's tutelage she began to write stories that might sell, and which were, at least, much better than she had ever written before. She became

enthusiastic, her work on the *News* began to show results, and David began to wonder whether he was in love. Eventually he decided that he wasn't.

One night when it was very warm, they came back from dinner, and Edith disappeared behind the screen. In a moment she reappeared, corsetless, and with a flimsy silken something or other falling from her shoulders to her ankles, and leaving her neck and bosom bare to the inner garment which had a pink ribbon in it.

She came behind David and read over his shoulder, acting exactly as though he were a girl. Her arm was across his shoulders, her head so close to his that her hair was against his temple, and he could feel her breath on his cheek.

"You're awfully sweet, Davy," she whispered. He reached up and took her hand, and she let his gentle pressure draw her close to him. Her cheek was very soft and smooth against his, and about her body, resting against his, there was an intoxicating perfume, a sweetness and innocence that thrilled him. He stopped reading, but keeping his eyes on her manuscript, drew her to his side, slipped his arm about her waist, and rested his head on her bosom. She seemed to like so much show of affection, and ran her fingers through his hair, yet once when he had tried to kiss her cheek, playfully and gently, she had been very angry.

She let him hold her, and waited for him to finish his reading. When he was done, he dropped the pages to his knees and looked up at her.

"I think it's lots better," he said. "Of course, you never can tell, but I think it ought to go."

"Oh, Davy," she cried, "you make me awfully happy, even if you really do it all yourself. But I am learning, I'm sure I am."

"There's no question about that; there isn't a thing I should criticize except Henry's long explanation to him-

self as to why he should go away and leave Sally and Jim to each other."

"But that's the strongest part of the whole story," she cried.

"Perhaps. I'm not sure; but I am as sure as I can be that it ought not to be so long; it ought not to be more than a paragraph at most, and I can't help feeling that the readers ought to get the point from the rest of the story and not have the explanation forced on them."

"But that would mean rewriting the whole thing, and I worked *so* hard on that part." Edith's voice was tragic and a little petulant. David could feel her body move as though his arm annoyed her.

"All right, honey," he said, "maybe you're right and I'm wrong. It isn't much more than a guess, but if I am right, it won't mean rewriting it all. It's got to be typed again anyway, and you could—"

"I won't do it. I don't agree with you." She snapped the words at him, flung off his arm and went across the room to the window. The softness and sweetness of her had gone in a flash; she was irritable, nervous, and harsh. She stood by the window for two or three minutes and then turned back to him.

"You're wrong; I know you are," she cried. "I don't care what you say or what the editors say; you—everybody—tries to eliminate everything worth while from a story and make it so that people don't have to think when they read it, so that it's all just cut and dried, as though it were turned out of a machine with a crank. I won't change it; I don't care if it never sells!"

She was very angry. She turned and looked out of the window again.

"All right, Edith," David said smiling a little sadly. "Your guess is as good as mine."

She paid no attention to him and he filled his pipe and lighted it. She had smashed to smithereens the charm



He looked up and saw Edith Coale. "What on earth are you doing here?" she exclaimed.

that she had cast over him only a few minutes before.

Suddenly she flew to him and threw her arms around his neck and buried her head on his shoulder. "Oh, Davy," she cried, "please forgive me! I'm sorry I spoke that way—I'm wrong, and I'll do whatever you tell me."

David wondered why she did not kiss him or give him her cheek or lips to kiss. He was glad she didn't. But a short time before he had wanted to kiss her in earnest and now he didn't; and he didn't want to do it unless he really meant it. He was not in love with her, but he was very fond of her, just as though she were a naughty child, and he wanted to take good care of her.

He did not think again of loving her. Beneath her face and figure, her wit, her charm, her smile, there was something that kept his heart cold. She had a most unstable and erratic temperament; she blew hot and cold; she had wild enthusiasms and periods of demoralization. David was sure that if he married her, she would love him with a wild frenzy for a month, or a year or even five years, and then not care for him in the least; instead, she would probably hate him and leave him.

She was not balanced. She dressed with a neatness that was delightful, but her room always looked as though it had been stirred up with an enormous egg beater; the drawers of her bureau were like her room, always in an awful mess; her typewriter desk and all about it was a foot deep with papers of every description. Her dress and her room, diametrically opposed, were typical of her. She had no stability and was most uncertain. She jumped from one thing to another, changed her mind and her likes and dislikes a dozen times a day. She would never make the sort of wife David wanted.

And yet, sometimes David was not quite sure of all this; he admitted to

himself that there was a possibility that his diagnosis was wrong. The girl had been taken care of all her life, and had been well-educated, and known only the soft spots of life, and had always been among kind and gentle people. From this condition she had thrown herself into hard and unsuccessful work, poverty, and loneliness; and she had broken with her father. She had come to Alden defiant and courageous, determined to be independent—and she had found it hard going. The strain was very, very great; her health had almost gone, had almost been starved out of her; it was all quite enough to disturb any one's equilibrium. Perhaps, just as her situation was not normal, her mind was not normal.

But David, right or wrong, was not in love; and at the end of two months, their friendship was broken off sharp. Two of Edith's stories, entirely rewritten by David, were sold, and she had five hundred dollars. The day the check came, they celebrated by having a sumptuous dinner on the Windham roof. She insisted that David should take half the money she had received for the stories. David, of course, refused, and they passed a delightful evening, arguing and laughing. She was bewitching, and David was almost, but not quite, convinced that he was wrong. As a friend she was perfect; as a wife she would be a gamble, with the odds against long happiness.

Early the next morning, she called David at his office and asked him to come quickly. He found her in the midst of ruin. She had put water on the gas stove to boil, and had left it while she went to the old tin bath tub down the hall. David had warned her of the danger over and over again, and had furnished hooks and cords to keep the curtains out of the way, but she had not used them that morning, and what the fire itself had not done, the firemen had. Most of her clothes had

been saved and were in a pile on the floor of a room down the hall.

Edith was in tears, but under David's ministrations she was soon in gales of laughter. She suddenly decided to go away, and she packed and went that very day, with her clothes and her five hundred dollars, somewhere to friends.

She told David that she would be back in a month, that he had been wonderful to her, and that they must meet the minute she came back. "I'm going to work hard and I know I'm going to succeed," she cried from the car platform. "I'm going to be famous some day, Davy, and it will all be because of what you've done for me. Promise you'll meet me when I come back—I'll send you word."

David went out of the station and stood on a curbstone. He shook his head and sighed. "Anyway, the Coxes will be back then," he thought, "and maybe they can make her behave." He was sure, then, that he understood Edith Coale rightly.

If Edith Coale came back to Alden before March, she said nothing to David about it, and he did not try to find her. He was satisfied to keep out of temptation's way.

The Coxes returned while David was out of town, and departed again immediately for more months. When they returned in January, he went to see them, and he had not been there ten minutes when Edith walked into the room. The genius, in poverty and despair, had vanished; in her place was a creature gorgeous as to hat, gown, furs, face, figure, and general bearing. She was a woman of the upper crust of society, bored and blasé. She greeted her aunt much too affectionately for sincerity, and was casual with the others, except David. Him she treated as though he were an insect.

David didn't want any gratitude, but

he was sorry she insisted on making a fool of herself. It was a far cry, her attitude toward him now, from breathing cigarette smoke through her lips to his. She would have no kissing, but she had done that.

"What perfect rot!" thought David, and let it go at that while he was there with her; but when he was alone, he was sure that he understood. She was very proud, and her pride had been trampled under foot. She had revolted against being a sponge-in-law; she had had ideals; she had promised herself and David that she would become famous, and she had failed. In her days of struggling, she had fallen into David's arms, literally and figuratively; she had been not only informal, but very free and intimate with him; and now she had surrendered; she had taken her uncle's money—and she had tried to hide her shame from David by a coldness which he was sure would have changed to hot tears if they had suddenly been transported to her old, third-story room. He understood and was sorry for her.

He said nothing to Arthur Coxe of what had happened during the summer. Edith Coale certainly was well taken care of some way or other, and the natural presumption was that the Coxes were doing it. Some months later, he mentioned her casually and Arthur shrugged his shoulders.

"She has written a play," he said, "that wasn't a go, and a book that didn't sell. She's trying short stories again now."

"Has she settled down, or rather, has she——"

"No, she hasn't, I'm sorry to say," Arthur answered. He seemed to understand the question better than David did himself. Then he added, "She's making a pretty mess of things." He said nothing of what David had done, and he certainly would have mentioned it if he had known of it.



"This is the life!" he cried, as the boat raced along.

The spring passed without David seeing or hearing of Edith Coale, and he did not try to find her. She was never at the Coxe's, and they never spoke of her. Summer came and was nearly gone when David had appendicitis. It took him three weeks to recover from the operation and the doctor insisted that he take two or three weeks more to get his strength back. David decided to do something foolish. He would lose himself in some out-of-the-way place and get local color for a story. What the story would be, he hadn't the slightest idea, but Portrain appealed to him. It was certainly off the beaten track, was a quiet spot, and he could loaf and read and fish there, to his heart's content. If Mrs. Watt would take him in no place could be better. Perhaps there wasn't any Mrs. Watt, for he had not heard of her since college days, but he could find out. There still was a Mrs. Watt and she answered his telegram with an enthusiasm that was pleasing, naming rates that were reasonable; and David packed.

Looking round for books to take along, he banged a couple of old ones together because they looked dusty. They weren't; they were just old; he had picked them up in a secondhand book store. David had a way of getting ideas for stories from old court reports. They hung the forgers and petty thieves in those days, but Dave didn't have to do that, and the two old books went into his grip.

He went to New York, took the Fall River boat, reached Portrain on schedule, and found Mrs. Watt waiting for him. His room was large, clean, and comfortable. Mrs. Watt herself was large, clean, and comfortable, and the first meal which she prepared for David bore out his recollection of the excellence of her cooking.

"Now what *are* you going to do here?" she asked. "Seems to me it's a mighty funny place for a city man to

come to all alone, especially after all the summer folks have gone!"

David told her about the appendix and his desire for the simple life.

"I thought you looked a little peaked," she said. "It will do you a lot of good round here, providin' you don't overdo."

During lunch, they talked over old times and the college boys who had stayed with her years before. After lunch, they were sitting on the little piazza close to the village street, when David asked, "Mrs. Watt, who's the meanest man in Portrain?" David had run across an idea for a story in one of the old books.

"Meanest man! Land sakes, what a question! They're all mean—there isn't one of 'em treats his wife like she deserves."

"And none of them is meaner, stingier than any of the others?"

"Not that I think of, particularly."

"Well then, who's the richest man in Portrain?"

"That's easy, and come to think of it, I don't know but what maybe he's the meanest, too; anyway, he's the hardest on folks he has dealings with. He's William Coale."

David never suspected that he was Coale, and not Cole.

A little later, he set off on a ramble. The bay was not more than half a mile away and he went toward it. A schooner was unloading coal at the wharf on the river and he stood and watched the operation for a few minutes, and then resumed his stroll.

Portrain was certainly not exciting. The small river that had been dredged to give a channel from the bay to the coal dock, a lumber yard, and a shipway that had not been used for years, lay tranquil and a little oily, in the afternoon sun. A fisherman's power boat was putt-putting somewhere out of sight, a farmer in a buckboard drove slowly along the main street, which was mighty nearly the only street, and dis-

appeared. There were two or three village stores, with two or three wagons hitched before them; a drug store, a millinery shop, and a tea room were closed, for they existed only for the summer trade. A woman, pushing a baby carriage, was the only human being in sight. David walked on, turned to the left toward the bridge, and found two boys fishing for eels. He watched them for a while and then crossed the bridge, passed the dozen houses on the other side, and wandered toward some men who were working on nets spread out high up on the gravel beach.

Finally, he came to a place where a rock offered a comfortable back; he sat down, lighted his pipe, and prepared to read. He had brought a volume of the law reports with him, but they were not interesting enough to hold his attention in competition with the gulls, the white sails on the horizon, the warm sunshine, and the salt air.

He had been there an hour when some one came over the low dunes. He looked up and saw Edith Coale.

"What on earth are you doing here?" she exclaimed.

"I came to see you, of course," he laughed.

"And you expected me to know all about it, and come down here to find you? I haven't been on this part of the beach twice this summer!"

"Have you been in Portrain all summer?" The question was innocent enough, but it made her blush.

"I've been here since May."

"I hope you're going to be here a while longer," he said.

"Oh yes, as far as I can see, I shall always be here."

David saw that the subject was distasteful to her, but whereas formerly she would probably have taken pains to show him that it was distasteful, now she tried to hide it from him. Then, before he had time to ask her a further question, she said:

"I couldn't make it go, and I'm back here, living with my grandmother. I'm not a genius, after all!"

"Aren't you writing any more?"

"Oh, yes, but I seem to have lost the incentive or the desire or something. I never did anything really worth while, and I suppose I realize that I never shall. Perhaps that is what makes trying to so hard. It drags terribly! I know the things I like to write won't sell, and when I try to write things that might, I keep fighting against myself, all the time."

"It is probably the transition period—the knack will come at some unexpected moment, and you'll give up following the wrong trail, and write what you like to write so well that you'll become famous."

"Did that ever happen to you, the transition period?"

"My star was never so high nor so bright as yours. I wrote, at first, for the fun of it; then, for what there was in it. I knew I could never become famous, and never had to worry about it; but just the same, I did pass through a sort of reorganization period. I thought I'd petered out, but now I guess it was only going from the hit-or-miss period to some sort of understanding of the game."

"You never had to worry; it really didn't make much difference to you whether you succeeded or not. Failure, to me, meant humiliation and the end of everything!"

"Oh, no, it didn't. Failure never happens, really; there is always hope. Some day you'll look back at this and laugh, and know that it was all part of the training."

They talked on for an hour, and David walked with her across the fields to her house. He met her grandmother, Mrs. Stevens, a picturesque and very old lady, whose age had in no way dimmed her mentality, nor her sense of humor. Before he left, Edith asked him to sail

with her to Wellton the next afternoon.

David went back to Mrs. Watt's, ate his supper, and took his hostess to the movies. At half past nine he was asleep. After breakfast the next morning, he sat on the piazza, read the morning paper, and watched the crowds go by. "The crowds" was his own phrase. The passers-by, in fact, were few and far between, and every one of them, man, woman, and child, said good morning to him.

"This" thought David, "is a place for a pretty, perfumed, pastoral tale with quaint old ladies, and some villain whose only imperfection is that he doesn't quite agree with the general conception of the only right and proper way to worship God, and who as a result can't marry the village belle. In the last chapter, he sees the light, of course. But I'm going to wish a thriller on them or bust! Holy smoke!"

Edith Coale had driven William Coale and the story in the old court reports from David's mind, and now they came rushing back. He got his book and read the report over again. "There's nothing new under the sun," he chuckled. "Can you beat it? John Rudd, old skinflint, gets a grip on John Bagg financially, and Bagg is in a fair way of going broke. Rudd offers to cancel Bagg's indebtedness and give him some cash to boot, if he will give him his daughter to wed. Bagg, in desperation, makes his daughter marry old Rudd. Note: Daughter is very beautiful, and willing to sacrifice herself for the family; nice girl! Bagg then prospers, but Rudd doesn't treat his wife any too kindly, and Bagg's conscience begins to trouble him. Things get worse for daughter and John Rudd gets killed. Bagg is suspected, but it can't be proved. For one thing, the motive is hard to discover. Motive suggested above, namely, saving his daughter from maltreatment, is not considered

strong enough, and John Bagg is declared not guilty. Note: He confesses shortly after, on deathbed. The final result is not mentioned in report, but of course, beautiful daughter gets all of both hubby's and daddy's money, is rich, marries a duke or something, and cuts a happy figure in society."

As David read that, the story of how Edith's father had married a young girl who had been his cook, came rushing back to him. Why had she married an old man like William Coale? David didn't care, except that perhaps there was a story in it like the one of long ago.

David joined Mrs. Watt in the kitchen.

"Mrs. Watt," he said, straddling a kitchen chair, and leaning on his arms crossed on the back of it, "when was the last hanging you attended?"

It took Mrs. Watt some moments to get the hang of that question. Then she said, "Do you think it's nice to talk like that to a perfectly respectable woman?"

"Why not?" said David. "They're rather good fun, I'm told."

But Mrs. Watt would have nothing to do with his joking, and David had to go about getting a clue to a story in a more circumspect manner. But he didn't succeed any better that way. If ever a place was lily-white and always had been, that place was Portrain. Even such an old and well-informed inhabitant as Mrs. Watt couldn't think up a blessed black mark against anybody. Mrs. Watt admitted that there had once been chicken stealing and that there had been suspicions, but that when two foxes were shot back in the woods, the suspicions "sorter" died out.

The job was hopeless. "Oh, very well," thought David, "I'll invent one; nobody'll ever know the difference!" Then to Mrs. Watt he said, "Where does William Coale live?"

"Thinking of calling on him?"

"Oh, I don't know, I might! He must be an amusing old rascal."

"Amusin'! I should say not. There ain't a more unpleasant man anywhere. Did you ever hear what he did when his wife died—a nice pleasant woman she was, too, and deservin' a better man than him! I don't see how she ever come to marry him, though it was before I was old enough to know much about it. He killed her, folks say, and I believe it too, naggin' her—and that reminds me, I hear you're acquainted with that pretty daughter of his."

"I have that honor, Mrs. Watt."

"H'm! Didn't come down here to see her, I suppose?"

"No, I didn't know she was here, or had ever been here!"

"Didn't, hey? Well, I suppose I've got to believe you, though I don't know as I do, but as I was saying, when his wife died, he goes right off and marries the hired girl. I haven't a thing against her, not a thing; she's a perfectly respectable woman as far as I know; comes from a family down toward Wellton; but I say it ain't right for a man to marry a servant and expect a girl like his daughter, proud and having good blood in her, to be pleased about it. I'd 'a' done just what she did myself, and been glad of the excuse to leave him, into the bargain! I guess *she's* sorry enough she didn't, by this time!"

David understood that it was the young wife who was sorry and not the daughter. Mrs. Watt told David where William Coale lived, and described the house, and David set forth to gather what local color he could. He found the house easily enough and was in luck, for William himself was trimming a walk with a sod cutter so near the gate that David, lounging along, could stop and speak to him. That sort of thing was new to David, but it seemed to be the custom of Portrain, and David took a chance.

Mrs. Watt had told him that old man Coale was short and a mite fat, which was description enough. David would have preferred a tall, skinny, angular man, with a clean-shaven face and thin lips and a hard face. But William was short and came pretty near being fat, and he had a drab, yellowish mustache. His face was lined heavily and not in fine creases, and it took a lot of examination to discover his real character in it. He looked as though he had done a great deal of dissipating, yet that was contrary to report. At first glance his eyes were his weak point. They were rather small and very smart and quite unattractive, and yet David couldn't help feeling that there was something wrong with that first impression of his. The more he thought of it, the more he believed that his second impression was correct, which was that old man Coale's eyes had fear in them!

"Fine day," said David.

"Very fine," said William, not stopping his work.

"Do you mind if I sit down on the grass and talk to you for a while?"

"Sit as long as you like." William was indifferent, to the point of coldness.

"Thanks. You see, I don't know much about Portrain. I've only been here two or three days and I want to find out some things about it. I'm told you're the smartest man in town."

The old man stopped trimming, and looked at David curiously, his lips squeezed together. Then, without speaking, he took up his work again.

"I was just wondering how much good farm land is worth round here."

"That depends on what you call good farm land."

David explained, but William didn't know the value, probably because he didn't know whether David wanted to buy or sell. David didn't make much headway and the old man wasn't in-



"Burned to death!" one of the men exclaimed. "No, he's dead, and not burned to death, either," muttered the man close to him. "Don't touch a thing—he's been killed!"

clined to sociability. He didn't ask David his name, or where he came from, or anything else.

Before he left, David saw William's wife, a young woman in no way remarkable except for an extremely buxom figure. She was good looking enough, but she did not seem particularly intelligent. David took her to be an ordi-

nary, uneducated, lower-class country girl; but why on earth she had married William Coale he could not imagine, unless it had been to escape the life of a hired girl. Perhaps she had had a cunning vision of an early widowhood and thereafter a life of ease. David thought that if that were so, she had used bad judgment, for William looked

good for many a year. He was not much over sixty.

William himself seemed to be nothing more than a crusty old chap. David thought that, on the whole, it would be a shame to kill William in cold blood. Perhaps he could find out something that he had done that wasn't real kind, and then have some one turn the tables on him. "That," thought David, "must be a good plot, because it's used all the time. Besides, there isn't even a pick-pocket in this old burg, to say nothing of any one with real, promising, criminal depravity."

David sailed that afternoon with the genius who had probably failed. She didn't look like a genius; she didn't act like a genius; perhaps she'd never been intended for a genius. He remembered the gorgeous, glittering, frosty lady of the Coxe's library, and compared her with the woman of Portrain. Now she was darkly tanned, her face had filled out, and she was overflowing with health. She wore no hat. Her skirt was of khaki, her waist of flannel, her shoes of white canvas and rubber-soled. There had never been any question about her being good looking, and she was much better looking now than he had ever seen her before, but now her beauty didn't seem such an important part of her. It was secondary to her vitality and health. Her nervousness was gone, and David felt immediately the absence of the occasional, antagonistic irritability which had always before been a part of her.

The bay was sparkling blue and white, the air so full of health-giving ozone that David could feel his lungs expand, his heart brace up and look on its work cheerfully; his blood cheered up and began to flow with real enthusiasm.

"This is the life!" he cried, as the boat raced along.

Edith smiled and glanced at him, and then back to the wind on the sail and

the course she was steering. They spoke in monosyllables mostly, and few of those.

They reached Wellton and she completed her business quickly. Even before the wind, they sailed home slowly, for the breeze died as the sun sank low. They walked along the lane to her grandmother's house, and David stayed to supper with them.

He was given a room to fix up in, and as he was leaving it he heard Edith downstairs. By chance, he glanced through the door of a room that was unmistakably hers. He stopped and took a good look at it, then he went inside and looked about, and finally he opened the top bureau drawer. It was all as neat as a pin. He stood looking at the open drawer for a moment, closed it, and went downstairs.

"Blessed if I know the answer," he thought. "It's beyond me. I hadn't any business there, but I'm glad I went."

The change from chaos, disorder, and confusion to neatness and perfect order, as exemplified in her bureau drawer in Alden and her drawer in Portrain, was an exact parallel with the change in Edith herself. Her soul had been tortured, her heart broken, and her mind had become disordered. Time had restored her vision and her courage, and she was herself again—substantial, calm, sane, and very lovely.

The evening was very simple. Quietly and casually Edith moved about doing this or that. At supper their one maid did not appear, and Edith changed the plates. After supper, they sat in the tiny sitting room, and the grandmother welcomed the smoke of David's pipe.

At nine o'clock, he took his way homeward slowly, dreaming. David was no man of literature and knew no writers great or struggling to be great, but he thought that he knew that Edith Coale was not, and never would be, a

writer of any account. She was not David's idea of the type. Back in Alden, she might have been anything, when from one minute to the next, she sank to the depths of despair in tears, and rose to the heights of enthusiasm with fire in her eyes. In Alden, she had studied the subordination of clothes; she had ignored them till on the day of gorgeousness at the Coxe's they had overwhelmed her. Before that, she had tried her best to belittle her beauty and the graceful curves of her body, and to enlarge her career and the qualities of her mind.

But the woman of Alden was not the girl of Portrain. The neat simplicity of her clothes made the glory of the woman shine forth. The color in her cheeks had cried aloud of the beauty they adorned, and the softness of her speech and the gentleness of her thoughts pictured the heart and mind of her.

"I knew it, I knew it," thought David. "That other business was just hysteria—a bitter, wronged woman struggling against herself and against the world. I knew I couldn't be wrong! I knew that this was underneath all the time!"

David fibbed to himself. He had been wrong, for he had decided just the other way. He had suspected what was underneath the veneer of her great ambitions, but he had not convinced himself that he was right in his suspicions. Later on, he *had* convinced himself that the girl was erratic and not desirable as a steady diet.

"The jig must have been up the day I saw her at the Coxe's, and she was just trying to brazen it out with me. She thought I knew it, and she was making believe she didn't care. She had let her Uncle Arthur help her, and she wasn't going to parade her hurt pride before the others, for my benefit. I wonder what would have happened if I'd been there alone?"

That wondering business got David

to his room at Mrs. Watt's, and in ten minutes he was asleep. The first thing he thought of when he awoke the next morning was Edith Coale, and it was very hard work to turn his mind to his story. But it had to be done—and William Coale having married somebody's more or less beautiful and surely young daughter, he resolved to follow the trail further. He called on Mrs. Watt's aid.

"Mrs. Watt, who was the present Mrs. Coale before she was married?"

"Sarah Hughes."

"And her father was John Hughes." David was thinking of the Johns—Bagg and Rudd.

"No, he wasn't; he was and still is Sam Hughes."

"Excuse me, my mistake. I recall that you said he lives down Wellton way."

"Yes, he does; he's a sort of foreman in the clay works."

"Nice, respectable gentleman, rather youngish—about your age, maybe?"

"Just about, I should—what's that you said about bein' youngish?"

"Young is that handsome is, Mrs. Watt. I'm going down to see John B—I beg your pardon, Mr. Sam Hughes—after breakfast. Somehow, I've got the name of John on my mind. I'll be back for lunch, with your permission."

"I hope you come back more sensible than you are now," she called after him. David turned and walked back.

"I'm going down to the clay works for a walk, and maybe I'll look 'em over, if they'll let me. If I see Mr. Hughes, can I tell him I'm a friend of yours, as a sort of introduction?"

"I guess it won't do any harm," said Mrs. Watt.

An hour later, David reached the clay banks, and within another half hour, he was talking with Sam Hughes. He was a large man, not quite so tall as David, but much heavier. His arms

were huge, his hands powerful, and his back a yard across. He was not a fluent talker, but was pleasant enough to David, though there seemed to be a scowl fixed on his face.

David spent an hour with him. The plant itself was not particularly interesting for it was rather crude and old-fashioned; but the white clay was pleasant to play with, and the red and blue clays running through it in streaks were pretty. But the important thing was Sam. David spoke casually of William Coale, and Sam's face clouded over; he spoke of Sarah, and Sam's face did more than cloud; but he would not speak of either of them. There was hate in his heart; there was torture in his brain, and there was strength in his arm. David had his story, and it was almost line for line the story of the two Johns in the old law reports.

He had his story sure enough, but he'd have to do Sam Hughes dirty if he lifted him out of real life and made a murderer of him, in fiction. Sam was no villain. The story of the two Johns had gotten the best of David and he was imagining things about Sam that weren't so. Sam's frown and the hate on his face were just fancies of his, but nevertheless he could wish 'em on Sam in the story—Sam would never know.

He said good-by and climbed to the top of the cliff, took out his notebook, and wrote a description of the country about him. He picked out an attractive cottage for Sam, and made notes on Sam himself. He reached Mrs. Watt's a little late for lunch.

Within two days David's story was written to the point where Sam Hughes went to William Coale, determined to make him treat his daughter as she deserved, or take the consequences. Sam was on fire. William Coale had loaned him money, and swindled him, and threatened him, and Sam had given him Sarah, and was now ashamed of him-

self. Sam knew, by that time, how much he loved his daughter and how much he hated William Coale. Sam would kill William in the story if necessary, but he would—

At that point David's typewriter stopped clicking, and he went downstairs to lunch. From lunch he went to Edith.

It was a warm day, and Edith was cutting the grass about the cottage. Her sleeves were rolled up, her hair was in disorder, and she was glowing. She would not let David take the lawn mower from her.

"It's my job; it's good for me. You're not strong yet, and besides, if you will call without notice, you've got to mind, or you can't come at all!"

"I'm strong enough, young lady, never fear! I've recovered completely, but it's such awfully good fun watching you that I'm glad you'll let me loaf. I don't suppose that you realize that you are the best-looking female lady on God's green grass, and therefore very well worth watching."

She stopped the mower and examined him closely. For just an instant, there was an expression of gratification on her face, but she quickly tapped her forehead with her finger.

"You haven't recovered in that part of you," she said. "It's still weak."

For two hours they talked together, and David was fascinated. The longing that he had for her back in that Alden summer multiplied a thousand-fold, and now there was nothing for his wise head to take exception to. She was no more an erratic flibbertigibbet, an unstable and dangerous genius, than he was. She was just woman, wholesome and pure, a girl who had been designed for wifehood and motherhood, and never for anything else of importance.

There wasn't any question about Edith now. There had been mighty little question after David's first sail with

her, and none at all, if he had only known it, after he had seen her bureau drawer. It had taken him a few days really to understand that the change in the bureau drawers was typical of the change in Edith herself. Back in Alden, he had been afraid of her; now he was sure of her beyond any shadow of a doubt.

On the evening of the next day he found only the grandmother at the cottage.

"Sit down," she said when he came in, "and talk to me a while. Edith will be here presently. She has had a hard hour or two. She's upstairs, getting over it."

Grandmother obviously tried to make light of whatever had happened.

"Is there anything I can do?" David asked the hackneyed question.

"No, there isn't—there isn't anything anybody can do! Her father has been raising ructions. He came here and made a scene. He didn't want her to see you; said you were after his money, and that you wouldn't get it! He wants Edith to go back to him; says he's tired of his wife. I'm afraid there's something wrong with him, something more than just being cross. I never saw him act like that before, though he's been getting worse for the last year. He never used to be that way. I never knew a nicer, pleasanter young man than he was, when he married my daughter. It wasn't until maybe three or four years ago that he began to be ugly. It seems to me he's never been the same since he had typhoid fever; seems as though he began to hate everybody and everything, including himself, when he was getting over it; and it's been getting worse ever since."

"He's very rich, isn't he?" David asked. He hardly knew why he put the question.

"Yes, he's pretty well off, for around here. That's another thing—he never acted queer about money matters, till

after he was sick. Before then, he was always helping people, and while everybody said he was a good business man, that was nothing against him. He was always fair and never took advantage of any one. He made lots of money out of his farm and some out of fish, but the clay works are really what made him rich. He ran across the white clay banks and bought them, and they turned out better than any one ever dreamed they would. There's some sort of stuff in them that's used for making paper mostly, and it's very scarce. He ships it away in schooners and in cars both, and gets lots of money for it.

"That's one of the things that's queer, too. He goes there nearly every day, and the men used to like him a lot, but now they hate him. They've all got their homes there mostly, and are all settled, and lots of them have been there for years, but he won't raise wages the way everybody else does, because things are costing so much more. And when they complain, he just tells them if they don't like it they can get out, and he'll get other workmen. They can't do that because they've been there so long, and own their homes, and nobody'll buy them, because they're afraid of William Coale."

"I understand," David said. Another similarity between Coale and Hughes and the story of the two Johns had come to light! Sam was foreman in William's clay works, and perhaps William had some hold on Sam which had influenced him in giving the old man his daughter. Queer business, that similarity.

David heard Edith on the stairs.

"Be good to her and cheer her up," the grandmother whispered.

But Edith had removed all traces of her tears, if there had been tears, and she hid within her whatever troubles she had. The only indication she gave of the ordeal that she had been through

was a little lassitude, and a gentle smile instead of laughter.

They sailed all the next afternoon and had supper with her grandmother again, and afterward he and Edith went to the post office for the evening mail. On the way home, they left the beaten track and walked along the beach to the place where David had first seen her, in Portrain.

The full moon, risen above the haze on the horizon, had made the walk along the beach possible. The moonlight, reflected in a long line from the wind-rippled water, lighted her face doubly. His love magnified her really wonderful beauty, and he was overwhelmed at the enormousness of the thing he was about to ask her. David was scared to death. He tried to speak out loud, but half stammered, half whispered, "Edith."

"Yes, Davy, I'm here."

Her bantering voice brought back at least part of his courage.

"I love—love you, Edie, very much." He stammered that, too, but the confession made, all his courage returned. "Will you marry me?" He didn't stammer then.

"Davy, Davy, Davy," she laughed, "how can you ask me such a question?"

She really seemed to think that he was very funny.

The question surprised Davy. Why on earth shouldn't he ask her to marry him? He was a perfectly respectable member of the community, entirely able to support a wife, and as far as he knew had no serious mental or physical ailments. But whatever effect she had meant her laughter to have, it roused David, and David roused, was no weakling.

"Ask you that question—why shouldn't I ask exactly that?" he exclaimed. "I want to marry you, I love you, and you wouldn't marry me without my asking you, would you?"

"No-o-o-o, I don't suppose I would."

"I love you, and I want you to marry me! I'll try my best to take good care of you and make you happy!"

"Of course, Davy, that's just redundancy. I love, I love you, marry me and we'll always be happy; you're the only woman in the world, and all that sort of thing—but! you've been ill, and you're getting well, and that's always a susceptible period for young men, and you've been here alone with me for a week. And the moon! Davy, the moon! It makes 'em that way. Why didn't you fall in love with me back in Alden, when you saw me in the bright sunlight as I really was, and as I really am now?"

She had found the weak spot in David's armor.

"That wasn't you, Edie," he said. "That was a make-believe girl, a girl who was angry, perhaps ashamed, and certainly swimming against a strong current. She was a wonderful woman, making believe that she was something else. You're meant to play the part that all good women are meant for, fundamentally."

"If all that were so, you would have known it then. You would have seen under the surface. You came very near loving me then. I know you did; it was easy enough to see; but you decided I wouldn't do, and that you wouldn't love me. Now it's the moon and convalescence. You'll get over it, Davy! Come along, I must go home to grand-mama."

She was still laughing at him.

"Grandmama will be all right for a little while! What you say about last summer isn't so, but suppose it were true, suppose I had made a mistake—am I to be everlastingly damned for it?"

They were walking toward the cottage.

"You're not to be damned or anything," she returned. "I'm just explain-

ing to you that you are simply extremely sentimental to-night."

"Edith, dear, please be sensible!"

"Davy, what language! 'Edith dear!'"

"But I mean it. Why won't you give up those foolish ideas of yours? Suppose you can write; suppose some day you do become famous; you'll be just as famous whether your name is Mrs. David Mott, or Miss Edith Coale. Think of the long years ahead for both of us, and how happy we will be together! You can do your work just as well in our house as here, or alone in Alden."

"No, there would be too many distractions."

"Aren't those distractions attractive?"

"Davy, I'm not going to quit. I came pretty near it; but I'm going back, and this time I'm going to succeed!"

"And you're not going to love anybody, ever?"

"Of course, nobody can tell about that."

"But that's your plan—you're the sort of woman who does not want to love or be loved. Love is weakness—your ambition is higher than that, is that it?"

"You know I was engaged once, Davy."

"Yes, I know that."

"And I'm terribly ashamed of what happened! Of course, I was very young, which is some small excuse for me. That experience has made me afraid of love ever since."

"Why, for goodness sake? You made a mistake, that was all; and that, by the way, should square us for the one you say I made in Alden, last summer."

"I didn't say you made a mistake. Quite to the contrary! Your judgment was excellent! But *I* did make a mistake; and mine was serious. I was ambitious even then; I was writing and studying hard. I met Harry Freeman

and fell in love with him. He had a wonderful mind, you know that; you know what he has done since. You know how thin and fragile he was—he was all mind. One day I had been with him for hours and was perfectly happy, when suddenly I saw another man—a brute, a perfect brute. He was six-feet-and-something tall and he weighed, I suppose, nearly two hundred pounds. His arms were hairy, his hands like—oh, huge! He had a big black-and-blue spot near his eye, and his nose was all battered up. He was not beautiful; he was so ugly he was funny; and he had no intellect that I could discover.

"And yet, Davy, at the very minute I saw him I knew that I could never marry Harry. I suppose the elemental woman in me, the inheritance of the stone age, suddenly took complete charge of my affairs. I didn't like the brute man himself. He annoyed me extremely. But I wanted to love a brute, to be loved by a big, strong animal. I wanted a man to love me who was so strong that my strength would be like a feather, compared to the iron of him. I did love what that man represented. You see what a fool I was. My engagement was broken within a week."

"And what sort of man do you want now?"

"I'm blessed if I know, Davy. I don't believe I want any sort of man."

"Edith, I'm the sort of man you want. I have plenty of brute strength and I really have an average intellect, honest I have, and besides, think how you could develop it! Why won't you love me?"

"Why won't I? How do you know I don't; you haven't asked me—no—stop! I don't love you, but I'll tell you one thing." She walked backward to the cottage door, and opened it. "You were the brute with the black eye!"



Sam Hughes looked at those about him calmly. "I've said all I've got to say. I killed him—I guess that's enough."

The door closed between them, and the bolt shot home.

"Please let me in."

"No, it's time for you to go. I'm going to bed."

There were more "pleases" and more "absolutely nos."

"To-morrow morning, then?" he begged.

"Will you be more sensible in the sunlight than you are in the moonlight?" she asked, with banter in her voice.

"Will you?"

"I couldn't be, possibly."

"I'll be around right after breakfast."

David walked out to the road and turned toward Mrs. Watt's. It was a very quiet evening, and all Portrain seemed to have gone to bed, though it was not much after nine o'clock. He walked on till he came to an open gate within which he knew was an apple tree, with apples on the ground beneath it. He found two and ate them. He lighted a cigar, one that he had carried about all day. It was a little worse for wear.

There was a large, open space in the trees, through which David could see the bay. He climbed the fence, and

sat on the top rail, making believe that he was looking at the moonlight on the water, when he was really trying to convince himself that Edith loved him and would admit it before many days had passed. Her arguments against love had not rung true. She had seemed very happy, her eyes had been bright, and her cheeks had glowed. There hadn't been a single note of sadness or sympathy for him in her voice. David was filled with hope and happiness. He stayed there till his cigar was finished, and then walked homeward.

He came to William Coale's house, and remembered the story that he was writing. What on earth should he do with the ending of that story? Sarah was the heroine and would have to be made happy at the end. He had taken care of that by dragging in a young lover whom she had given up to save her father—but what should he do with Sam Hughes? Altogether, the story was rather melodramatic, and, at that moment, David wasn't enthusiastic about it.

There was one lighted window in William Coale's house, downstairs at the right. David thought of married life with Edith, and then of what the married life in that house must be. He wondered what it could be—whether at that moment the old man and the young woman were sitting quietly in the room by the lamp, reading. He could not see, for the vines were in the way. But he could see that the shades were up and perhaps they wouldn't mind if he took a peek. He had started toward the window before he realized that one didn't do that sort of thing. He stopped.

At that instant he heard a voice. It was loud and angry. Then he heard another voice for an instant, but it was indistinct, and he could not tell whether it was a man's or a woman's.

David ran quickly toward the window. The piazza and its railing barred

his way, but he could see through the vines. William Coale was standing by a small table on which, at his right, was a large kerosene lamp. He was very angry, but his voice had fallen, so that David could not hear what he was saying. David could see no one else, but it was evident that some one was in the room, at David's left. William Coale's voice was the only one he heard. Even when the old man stopped speaking, there was no answer. David, seeing that nothing serious was afoot, realized that he had no business there, spying on family fights, and turned back to the road. He walked diagonally across the lawn, vaulted the low fence and set out for Mrs. Watt's domicile. He forgot the story; he forgot the Coale family; he forgot everything except Edith Coale, and seeing her the next morning, immediately after breakfast.

Somehow or other he would make her see the light. He had nature on his side—healthy girls were made for marrying, and Edith was no longer a nervous, hysterical, dramatic female, fighting with her back against the wall, but a strong, upstanding, clear-eyed, warm-skinned woman, ripe for winning. Davy would win her. He was wondering whether it was plain conceit which made him so sure of his ability to win her, when his musing was stopped short by a scream.

It came from the direction in which he had come, and it was a woman's voice. For an instant, David was not sure whether it was a scream of terror or alarm, or whether it was simply the loud cry of a girl skylarking. It was not repeated, and he was about to put the latter interpretation on it, when he heard a man shout, and then another. Something was wrong! David ran back in the direction of the sounds.

He saw a man running across the road toward William Coale's house and a glance showed him what was wrong. The room in which David had seen

William Coale was a mass of flames, easily enough seen through the vines.

David reached the piazza just behind the man who had come across the road. They reached the front door together, and as they opened it they recoiled before the cloud of smoke that poured out on them. For a moment they hesitated, and then David cried, "Try the back of the house!" They both ran. David turned to the right, the other to the left.

Intent as he was on the business at hand, David, as he ran, saw a dim figure in the shadow of the trees. He saw it surely, and afterward he was sure that it was the figure of a woman, and that she was in white, and running toward the road. It made no impression on him then. Perhaps he thought it was a servant or even Mrs. Coale, running for aid. Afterward, he knew that it was neither, and he could not remember that the woman had shouted as she would have done if she had been in search of assistance.

The back door of William Coale's house was open, and the wind from the bay kept it clear of smoke. A third man joined David and the other man as they entered the house.

The smoke was dense, but they could see flames in the corner room. David saw that some opening must be furnished for the smoke, if they were to reach the fire.

"Go round and open the front door!" he shouted, and one of the men, understanding, quickly disappeared. Then David, guessing at where the window was, grasped a small chair and waited. In a moment he heard the door open and almost instantly the smoke-filled hallway cleared. Then David took a long breath, and with the chair before him, went into the room. There was no obstruction and he reached the opposite wall. A thrust or two, and he found the window, smashed the glass, and regained the hall, breathless and

his eyes smarting. He felt something hot about his legs and saw that his white flannel trousers were smoldering. He beat out the sparks quickly, and saw the two other men in the dim light of the flames. It looked as though the floor were on fire. Some one said "water," but David, suddenly remembering the large kerosene lamp, was sure that the flames came from it. "Get rugs!" he shouted.

They found two and with them made quick work of it. In a moment there was no more fire, and they were in total darkness. Then, with matches, they found a lamp in another room, lighted it, and went into the burned room.

The thin, cotton curtains were gone, and the window frames scorched. A chair was overturned at the right, and on the left the center table was overturned. The broken lamp was on the floor in the middle of the room.

Under the window, on the left, almost hidden by the table and a large chair, lay William Coale. There was still a haze of smoke in the room and they could see him only indistinctly. One of the other men saw him first and rushed toward him, then hesitated. David and the third man stood and stared. William Coale was surely dead. The first man, leaning over him, muttered, "Dead."

William's mouth was half open and his eyes were wide open. His back was against the wall, his head bent away from it, his legs were stretched outward into the room and were beneath the table. The table cover, half burned and still smoking, was across his waist. There was an ugly gash across his forehead.

"Burned to death!" one of the men exclaimed.

"Perhaps he's not dead—oughtn't we to get him out of here?" David asked.

"No, he's dead, and not burned to death, either," the man close to him

muttered. "Don't touch a thing—he's been killed—wait till the authorities get here!"

David straightened up, and suddenly the story he was writing flashed through his mind. The old man had been killed, and there was a real villain in Portrain, after all. He turned and found himself hemmed in by a crowd of people, asking questions, and as the news spread he heard gasps of horror.

Then he felt some one grasping his arm, and he looked down. It was Edith Coale.

"David, get the people outside, please!"

No one seemed to be in authority, and David knew that if murder had been committed, nothing in the house should be touched. The two men who had come with him were still beside him. He turned to them and said, "I think the body oughtn't be touched! The people should leave the house!"

Then he heard Edith speak to one of the men. "Please, Dr. Cuttle, ask the people to leave!"

The man addressed was the one who had just said that William Coale was dead. Before he had time to speak, there were cries from the back part of the house, and the people turned in that direction. The three men and Edith Coale were left alone in the room. Then they heard some one calling "Doctor Cuttle" in a voice that showed something serious was afoot.

David closed the door and waited. Edith stood beside him.

"Oh, Davy, Davy," she whimpered, and with a moan slid into David's arms. She was not crying, but he could feel her trembling, and her fingers grasped his hand and his sleeve convulsively. David forgot the horror that was in the room; forgot the crowd in the room before him; forgot everything but the girl who asked him to comfort her. For the minutes that they stood there, he believed that the shock had made her

surrender to him; that when the little things of life had been swept away and only the big things counted, she had gone where she felt she could find the consolation she needed. If he has ever been kind to her, no father can be anything but precious to his child, and William Coale had been very kind to Edith for many years!

But they were soon disturbed. William Coale's wife, who had been Sarah Hughes, had been found lying half on the floor and half on a couch in the back room where she had fallen, and she was, if not unconscious, close to it. She was muttering half-formed words in a low voice, hardly above a whisper. A great welt ran from her jaw across her cheek to her left eye, as though she had been struck with some unimaginable instrument. The mark was wide, and as pronounced as though it had been inflicted by the lash of a whip.

Doctor Cuttle and another man carried her upstairs, passing close to David. Edith shuddered, and David felt her finger nails digging into the palm of his hand. Then Leonard Cousins, Portrain's only officer of the law, came, and whatever Len's qualifications for his office may have been on ordinary occasions, in this emergency he rose to sublime heights. Len took charge in no uncertain manner. First he called sharply the names of three or four citizens, and gave orders to them to clear the house and stand guard. He requested two ladies of Portrain to remain and do anything for Mrs. Coale that Doctor Cuttle might desire. This accomplished, he entered the burned room, came out, asked all the questions he could think of, and set forth to the nearest telephone to call for help.

The Boston police promised aid at once by automobile, and Len returned to the Coale house, took up a dignified position, and waited for the Boston automobile.

All this time Edith was with David. When Leonard Cousins came back and said that Boston detectives were coming, Edith asked David to go home with her.

"I must see that grandmother is all right, and then come back here," she said.

On the way to her house David protested, but she would not listen. Back she would go and back she did go, clutching David's arm, when they found that all was quiet at her house. It was not until they were back at William Coale's that David realized the horror of what had happened. The people standing about, talking in hushed voices, the men on guard at the doors, and the girl trembling beside him, suddenly drove away the unreality and left him face to face with a grim and terrible crime.

And then there flashed across his mind the recollection of his hunt for a man who would kill William Coale. There came the recollection of Sam Hughes and the story of the two Johns. In David's story Sam Hughes killed William Coale. Who had killed him in real life? David had been not more than twenty feet from the man who had done it; he had heard William Coale shouting at him in anger, and it had happened within three or four minutes of the time that David had stood looking through the vines.

Edith spoke to him and roused him from his reverie.

"Come, Davy," she said, "let's go where we can sit down."

She went toward a bench under the trees, and when David saw her in her white dress in the shadow of the trees, his heart almost stopped beating. The woman he had seen running away from the house as he was running to the back door had been Edith Coale!

What had she been doing there? He had left her in her own house and she had said that she was going to bed,

and yet she had gone to her father's house and had run away from it when the alarm had been given. David remembered the apples he had eaten and the cigar he had smoked on the fence. It must have been while he was smoking that she had passed, and he had not seen her.

Had she been in the room with her father when David was looking through the vines? Had it been she that William Coale was cursing, and if it had been she—if it had been she—

The grim question stared David in the face. What did Edith Coale know and what had she done; why had she been running from the house without shouting, and why had she been at the house at all? And added to all that, Edith had trembled; she had clung to David for support; she had gasped with horror; but she had not asked if it were known who had killed her father; and on their walk to her house and back again she had not asked. Could it be possible that she knew who had done it, or that she had been in the house when it was done? David could not ask himself the only other question there was to ask.

She was very quiet; her head was resting against the trunk of a tree, her eyes were closed, and her hands were in her lap. David's thoughts, as he watched her, flew back to the hot summer days in Alden, when she had flown into tempers in a flash, tempers that passed as quickly as they came. She had been a fiery woman then, one who lost all control of herself, one who could hate bitterly, for a moment, when she was provoked.

But in Portrain she had been calm, quiet, restrained, gentle, and sweet. David knew that the girl of Portrain was the true woman, and that she could do no wrong. There must be some simple answer to all his questions, and she would explain if he asked her.

"Edith!" She opened her eyes and

turned her head toward him. "How did you hear of all this and get here so quickly?"

"I was here—I——" and she stopped.

"But I thought you were going straight to bed when I left you."

"I was, but I——" She stopped again and he waited for her to speak.

"Tell me, Edie," he said finally.

"No, I can't tell you," she said, and hid her face in her hands wearily. Then she looked at him and smiled wearily, too.

"I'm glad you're here, Davy," she said. "I don't know what I should do without you! You always seem to be near when I need you most!"

At that moment they heard excited voices across the lawn and saw a big automobile stop at the gate. The men from Boston had come.

There were Frank Reilly, William Angus, and James Murray, and the leader of them was Murray. He was a tall man with very broad shoulders, and thin as to the rest of him. His voice was very low and he spoke very little. His face was as mild as a May morning. His eyes were blue and gentle, his mouth kind, his nose hooked a little, and his chin not in the least pugnacious. If ever there was a great detective who didn't look the part, that detective was James Murray, but his fame was great and his experience long.

He and his two men went to the house and into the room where William Coale still lay as he had fallen. Leonard Cousins followed close at their heels. Murray made a quick examination and in a minute was dictating notes to Angus. Murray had been in the room perhaps ten minutes before he leaned over the body against the wall, and drew from under it a carpenter's hammer. He examined it carefully and then handed it to Reilly.

"Wrap it up—and be careful of it on account of finger prints," he said. Then he turned to Len Cousins, who

was ready for him, for Len had asked all the questions he could think of.

Len told him that Doctor Cuttle had got there first, with the young fellow who was staying up at Mrs. Watt's, named Mott, right after him, and Arthur Simms next, meeting them as they came round the house. Then followed the beginning of a narrative that Len had pieced together, but Murray, so kindly that Len's feelings were not hurt in the least, broke it off, and asked him to get the three men into the house.

Doctor Cuttle was still hard at work over Sarah Coale, upstairs. Simms came quickly, but it took a minute to find David, and during that minute something happened.

Malinda Snow forced her way into the house and with some hitherto unsuspected intuition, picked out Murray as the chief of police and the great man of the moment.

"Be you the chief of police?" she demanded. Murray, having no time to discuss technicalities, said he was.

"Then I want to talk to you! I got something mighty important to tell you!" Malinda was excited, very much in earnest and very much impressed with the part she was playing. She impressed Murray, too, and he said, "Come in here," and led her into the next room, closing the door.

A moment later they came out, Murray smiling, and Malinda with her lips squeezed tight. She had orders to say nothing, and more impressed than ever with the prominence that had been thrust upon her, she was not going to rely on only her mental powers to keep from talking. She was going to keep her mouth shut and breathe through her nose, so she just couldn't talk. It was a dramatic, once-in-a-thousand-lifetimes moment for Malinda!

Then Malinda stopped, saw David, turned round, and with her hand close



The news had sped to the surrounding towns and it seemed as if every man, woman, and child had forthwith set out for Portrain, to see what was to be seen.

to Murray's ear, she whispered, "That's him!" and marched out of the house, across the road to her house and went to bed. She hadn't been in bed five minutes before she was up again and leaning out of the window, wishing that somebody would ask her what she knew and had told the chief of police, so that she could keep her mouth shut with some worth-while effect.

Back in the Coale house, Murray, his men, and Len Cousins listened first to Doctor Cuttle's story. He had been at the Simms' across the street when he heard Mrs. Swan scream, and as soon as he knew what the scream was about,

he had run to the Coale house, and met David Mott coming down the road. Then they had met Arthur Simms and had gone into the house. Then he told what had happened after that.

Arthur Simms had been in his stable and had heard shouts, and had cut across his back yard and got to the back of the Coale house at the same time as the others. From then on, he had nothing to add to what Doctor Cuttle had told.

Then it was David's turn. Murray turned to him and asked, "Can you add anything to what the others have said?" There was just one thing that David

was thinking of, and he could not add it to what the others had said, namely, that Edith Coale had been—good God! Where had she been?

"Well, Mott?" Murray said.

then a man, or more than one man, shout, and I ran back."

Murray sat looking at him quietly, with no sign of any particular interest.

"Is that all, Mott?"

"Yes, that's all."

"Umph," Murray muttered. He rose, walked to the lamp, and lighted a cigar over its chimney. For a minute he watched the smoke clouds dissolve in the air, and then said, "Suppose I have a chat with you in here," and he walked into the room to which he had taken Malinda, closed the door, pointed to a chair, sat down, and offered David a cigar. He watched David light it, and then said, "Mott, hadn't you better tell me all you know?"



They went to the Coale house and found a crowd about it.

David started up, his face white and his eyes searching Murray.

"No, I can't add anything, except that I was walking down the road toward home, perhaps two hundred yards, when I heard a woman scream, and

And still David could think only of Edith Coale.

"I've told you all I know," he said.

Murray smiled at him with an expression that was as gentle as if he had been asking of an old friend's health.

"I don't think you have," he said. "Weren't you on the place a little while before you heard the shouting and came running back?"

"Good Lord, yes!" David cried. "I forgot all about it!" and he told Murray exactly what he had done, and what he had seen and heard.

Murray's face brightened. "That fits with what that woman told me. She said that she was sitting in her window and saw a man with white trousers go into the place and come running out pretty soon, jumping the fence. Did you do that?"

"I jumped the fence, but I didn't run."

"And why did you go into the place at all?"

David's spirits had risen high when he knew that Murray knew nothing of Edith Coale, and he laughed.

"I'm not going to tell you now," he said, "but I give you my word, it was a damn-fool reason, and I can prove it just as soon as you can give me half an hour. If I told you now, you wouldn't believe it!"

"You don't remember me, do you?" Murray asked.

"No, I don't, I'm sorry if I ought to."

"You wouldn't, but I remember you! You're Dave Mott, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"The great and only Dave Mott, that I used to watch play football?"

Davy grinned.

"Maybe you did," he said.

"Then I'll believe anything you tell me, till I'm dead sure you're lying!"

There was no resisting the man.

"It's a long story," he said.

"Before you begin, do you know anything about Coale, his family, past life, and that sort of thing?"

"Yes, I know a good deal about him."

"Tell me the whole story."

David did, just as it has been told here.

"And so you think that the only person in Portrain who could have killed Coale is his wife's father?"

"And make a story out of it, yes. In real life he's no murderer."

"Maybe you're right, maybe you're right, but——" Murray walked across the room and picked up a window shade that lay on a chair. The shade itself was partly torn from the roller.

"Somebody was tacking or getting ready to tack this shade on the roller," he said. "Presumably he or she had a hammer. There was a hammer on the floor under Coale. How do you suppose her father could have got hold of the hammer? What did you say his name is?"

"Sam Hughes."

"Has any one seen him round here to-night?"

"I don't believe he's been here—I haven't seen him, anyway."

Murray was still fondling the window shade.

"You say that story is written up to about nine o'clock to-night?" he asked.

"That's one way of looking at it."

"And wouldn't it be rich if Hughes was the man! Where's the daughter?"

"Upstairs—didn't you see her?"

"I mean Coale's daughter. What's the matter, Mott?"

"Nothing's the matter, except I hate to have her dragged into this business."

"Are you a good friend of hers?"

David nodded his head.

"More than that, Dave?" "Dave" didn't sound 'familiar;' it was just pleasant.

"No."

"I've been wondering why you came here—to Portrain, I mean."

"I told you why I came; I didn't know that she was here."

Murray grinned and put his hand on David's shoulder. "You're a liar, boy," he said. No one could have taken offense at those words, they were so filled with kindly, human understanding.

"No, I'm not, chief; it's the solemn truth!"

"Oh, I don't mean about knowing who was here. I mean you're not telling the truth when you say you've told me all you know." Then, looking straight into David's eyes he said, "The trouble is, your face wasn't designed to hide lies. Hadn't you better tell me?"

David's eyes fell and his face burned. He could not answer.

"Come, tell me," Murray said.

"Nothing doing, chief," he said.

"All right, but you're doing your girl more harm than good."

And then David knew that Murray had guessed that the only person in Portrain that David would shield was Edith Coale, and that he, like a fool, had given the whole thing away. Murray walked to the door, opened it, and spoke to the men outside.

"Ask Miss Coale to come in here," he said, and within a minute Edith walked into the room, and Murray closed the door behind him. Edith seemed perfectly at ease, and she smiled at Murray without the slightest sign of nervousness.

"Won't you tell me, Miss Coale, what you know about what happened here o-night?"

Edith told her story quickly. "I was on the path near the barn, walking toward the road, when I heard a woman scream. At first, I thought it came from this house, but in a minute I heard a man shout, and I was sure that it was from across the road. I don't remember exactly what I did then, but I think I stood still for quite a while, wondering whether anything was wrong, and what I should do. Then I ran across the lawn under the trees and saw Mr. Mott running around the

house. I think I stopped for just an instant till I saw that the trouble was in this house, then I followed Mr. Mott. There were two other men with him, Doctor Cuttle and Arthur Simms. Arthur Simms went around to the front of the house and I stayed behind Mr. Mott and Doctor Cuttle. In a minute, Mr. Simms came back, and pretty soon the fire was out. After that, I stayed with Mr. Mott till the people went out of the house. Then I went to my house with Mr. Mott and came back here and waited."

"Then you don't live here?"

"No, I live with my grandmother."

"Close by?"

"About half a mile down the road."

"And you just happened to be in this place when the trouble started?"

"Yes."

"Would you mind telling me what you were doing here?"

"Just taking a walk."

"Alone?"

"Yes."

"Do you do that often, so late in the evening?"

"No."

"Why did you do it to-night?"

"I—I don't know." Edith's eyes had been fixed on Murray's, but when he asked that question they dropped, and the blood rushed to her face.

"Perhaps just because it was a pleasant night, and you weren't sleepy—and you just happened to come here?"

"Yes, that was it, I think."

"What had you been doing during the day?"

Edith told him.

"And this evening before you came here, on your walk?"

"Look here, chief," David broke in, "hasn't Miss Coale told you the truth? What's all this got to do with it?"

"Why didn't you tell me that you saw her here when you came back, and why won't Miss Coale tell me her real rea-

son for taking a walk alone at that time of night?"

"She has told you the——"

There was a knock on the door, and Angus opened it without waiting for Murray's answer. "Better come here, chief," Angus said.

Murray went to the door. A newcomer, a great brute of a man, was standing in the room.

"Are you the chief?" he asked.

Murray nodded.

"I killed Coale," the man said.

"So," said Murray, "and who are you?"

"I'm Sam Hughes, and I'm glad I did it!"

Murray shot a quick glance at David.

"H'm, suppose you tell us about it," he said. "Take down what he says, Bill, and"—turning to Sam—"remember that whatever you say may be used against you."

Sam Hughes looked at those about him calmly, with no fear on his face.

"I've said all I've got to say. I killed him—I guess that's enough." Sam's voice was hardly above a whisper.

"Yes, that would be enough, if we knew you were telling the truth," Murray said, "but we don't know that. Hadn't you better tell us how it happened?"

"I killed him—that's enough."

The room was so quiet that the men in it could almost hear their hearts beat. Murray and Hughes faced each other in a battle of will. The eyes of each of them bored into the other's eyes till Murray won, and Sam's eyes fell; and Murray believed that whether or not the man before him had killed William Coale, he knew *who* had done it.

"All right, Hughes," he said. "We'll have to lock you up. Reilly, take——" And then there was a commotion and high voices outside. They heard steps in the hall, and the rotund figure of a man, puffing and perspiring, stood in the doorway. He was Walter Good-

enough, the village storekeeper in Portrain.

He asked no permission to speak, but addressing every one, he pointed at Sam Hughes and cried, "Did he say he did it?"

Murray nodded, and Sam Hughes said again, "I killed him."

Walter shook his fist at Sam Hughes. "It's a lie!" he cried, and then he turned to Murray. "It is, I tell you, it's a lie! I heard him say he done it and then he turned round—and come here so damn' fast I couldn't keep up with him. I met him down on the meadow road—and I says, 'Have you heard what's happened?' and—and he says, 'No,' and I could see he don't know without half lookin' at him—and I tells him, and he didn't know a thing about it because I can see it in his face with the moon shining on it—and besides, right off quick he says, 'Good God! It can't be; it ain't so!' an' he's tellin' the truth that he didn't know nothin' about it—and then he thinks quiet for a spell, and then I sees a sort of horrified expression come into his face—and—and then he says he done it, and starts off here! I've knowed Sam Hughes, man and boy, for forty years, b' Jove, and I'd know he wouldn't kill nobody, and didn't kill Will Coale, even if I hadn't seen on his face that he don't know a thing about it till I tell him!"

If ever a man spoke with conviction, Walt Goodenough did then. Murray listened with his head lowered and his finger tips pressed together.

"If you did it, Hughes, why not tell us how it happened?" Murray asked.

Hughes shook his head. "I did it," he said. "What difference does it make how it happened?" And he would say nothing more.

Murray rose and stretched his arms. "This friend of yours, Hughes," he said, "says you didn't do it, and your refusal to tell how you killed Coale makes it look as though you didn't

know how he had been killed. Are you sure you aren't trying to shield somebody else—somebody you love? It looks that way to me."

Sam Hughes refused to answer.

"A-a-a-ll right," Murray drawled, "I'll be back in a minute—will you all please wait for me?"

He went out of the room and upstairs where Doctor Cuttle was sitting beside Mrs. Coale's bed. Murray beckoned to him and the doctor stepped into the hall.

"What shape is she in?" Murray said.

"Bad, I'm afraid. I don't think the blow on the face has done much harm, but her mind has gone completely. I'm afraid it will take a long time to bring her round."

"Will she be able to remember what happened?"

The doctor shrugged his shoulders. "Perhaps," he said, "but I doubt it."

"Can you leave her for a minute?"

Doctor Cuttle could, and they went downstairs to the room where William Coale still lay on the floor. Murray moved the lamp so that its light fell full on the dead face, and for ten minutes, speaking in low tones, they examined the body.

Then Doctor Cuttle went upstairs, and Murray went back to the others.

"We're through for to-night," he said.

"Reilly, you take Hughes to the jail, and make him comfortable. Bill, you stay here and see that nothing is touched. The rest of us will go to bed." Then to David he said, "Can you put me up to-night?"

"Yes."

"Then wait for me outside. I'll be back in a little while, and constable, as soon as you can find the coroner, ask him to have the autopsy made immediately." Then he went outside where Edith was. "Miss Coale, will you let me take you home?"

Pleasantly as he spoke, David knew that it was an order and not a request, and that there was nothing for her to

do but obey, and nothing for him but to wait, as he was told.

Edith Coale and Murray walked down the path and along the road. They were nearly at her house before Murray spoke.

"Miss Coale," he said, "do you realize that by not telling me all the truth you are making a lot of trouble for me, and that you are likely to make a lot of trouble for all sorts of people?"

"But I have told you the truth."

"Possibly, but you have not told me why you took a walk alone so late to-night."

"Does it make any difference?"

"It depends on why you did it. You see, it seems so very improbable to me that you took that walk solely for the sake of the walk."

"But I did."

"Are you sure? If I promise never to tell a living soul, won't you tell me the real reason?"

To Edith it seemed as though there were a suggestion of a laugh in his voice.

"Does it really make any difference?" she asked.

"It makes this difference: when people do unusual things at or about the time that a crime is committed, and very close to where it is committed, there is always the probability or at least the possibility that their actions have some connection with the crime. If those actions are explained plausibly and satisfactorily, it helps clear up the whole thing; if they're not, there must be suspicion—and complication. If the truth would implicate you or implicate any one you love, don't tell me. If it wouldn't, I think you should tell me."

Edith stopped and looked hard at Murray's face in the moonlight. "Will you promise never to tell?" she asked.

"Yes. I have promised, but I'll promise again."

"Then I'll tell you." And she told Murray what she had to say, and then

walked slowly to her door and disappeared inside.

Murray walked back to David and together they went to Mrs. Watt's house. "Will you let me read that story of yours?" he asked.

"Read away, though I think you'll enjoy sleeping more," David said. But Murray sat down, stretched his legs to a nearby chair, and started on the manuscript, meanwhile puffing clouds of smoke from his cigar.

David undressed slowly, and then waited for Murray to finish.

"A fine tale," Murray said, when he finally laid down the papers. "A fine tale, and easy to finish."

"How should I finish it?" David asked.

"Any way you like—that's what makes it easy. If you had to finish it the way it really happened, that would be harder."

Then David, who had asked no questions, exploded. "For God's sake, Murray, if you know who killed him, tell me!"

"Don't you know?"

"Know! Of course I don't know!"

"You ought to! Who is the only person whose actions and presence on the premises haven't been explained?"

"You don't mean——"

"Edith Coale? Of course, who else?" And then Murray laughed. "Don't worry, old man, they never convict pretty girls in cases like this."

"Murray, are you joking?"

Murray lay back in his chair and laughed. "It's bedtime, son," he said, and in two minutes he was sound asleep on David's couch.

When David awoke the next morning Murray was gone, but on his bureau he found a note from him. He read:

Miss Coale wants to see you. J. M.

David dressed and rushed through breakfast, answering Mrs. Watt's

rapid-fire questions as best he could, between mouthfuls. Then he went in search of Edith, and found her sitting calmly on her piazza, sewing.

"Good morning, David," she said.

"Murray told me that you wanted to see me, Edith. Of course, I was coming anyway but his message made me hurry. I was asleep not over a minute or two ago."

"I wonder why he told you that."

"Don't you want to see me?"

"Of course, but there is nothing special, and I said nothing to Mr. Murray."

"I'm sure I don't understand, but it doesn't make any difference. Did you sleep well?"

"Yes, quite well, but I am very sad, Davy. I have been sitting here thinking, and somehow I believe I did very wrong to leave father, even when he married that woman. I never thought of it before, but it seems to me that something has been wrong with father for the last four or five years, and I can't help feeling that it was some sort of sickness, something wrong with him physically, and not just bad temper and ordinary misbehavior."

"Didn't he have an accident, or an illness, four or five years ago?"

"Yes, and oh, Davy! when I knew last night what had happened, I didn't think of the horror of it all—my first thought was that he was happy again as he had been years ago, and not unhappy and hating everybody and everything. It wasn't till this morning that I realized how terrible it all was, and began to wonder how it had happened. All that happened last night seems like a dream, from the time you left me here till I woke up this morning. It seems as though it had happened a thousand years ago. I came out here and sat down and waited. I couldn't go back to the other house alone. I am not sure that I can go at all."

"I think it is better for you to stay here. I will go, and tell you all I can

find out. There is nothing that you can do."

"Did Sam Hughes really do it?"

"I don't know. I know nothing more than we both knew last night, when you came back here with Murray."

"Does Murray suspect any one?"

"I don't know. I asked him who did it and he told me you did."

"David!"

"It was some kind of joke—Murray seemed to think it was very funny. He said that you were the only one near by who wouldn't explain why you were there, or what you were doing, so that suspicion naturally fell on you. For some reason he was teasing me, and before, when I was in the room alone with him, he told me that he knew I wasn't telling all I knew."

"Didn't you?"

"No, I didn't tell him about seeing you running across the lawn, and then he sent for you, and what you told him made him sure that I had seen you."

"But why didn't you tell him?"

"I wasn't sure that it was you."

"David!" He had lied to protect her, but why had he thought it necessary to protect her. What could David say? What he did say didn't help matters.

"I was excited; I could not think clearly; I saw you when I had supposed you were in bed at home. I—I didn't know what had happened, or why you were running from the house, or how you had gotten there. It wasn't until Murray tried to tease me that I knew I had made a fool of myself."

"But your first thought was that I had had something to do with it."

"My first thought was of you, to protect you, and if I carried my idea of protection too far, I am sorry; but I loved you too much to think of anything but you, and saving you from trouble or annoyance, or whatever it was. When I had time to think calmly, I knew that I had done wrong."

"All right, Davy, I understand, I

think. I've changed my mind. Will you take a walk with me?"

They went to the Coale house and found a crowd about it. The news had sped to the surrounding towns and it seemed as if every man, woman, and child had forthwith set out for Portrain, to see what was to be seen, which of course, was nothing but the outside of an ordinary house. Vehicles of all kinds lined the street, and it was only Len Cousin's watchful eye and sharp voice that kept the people off the flower beds and out of the house.

There was little news. The body had been taken away; Sam Hughes still refused to say how or why he had killed William Coale; and Sarah Coale was in so serious a condition that Doctor Cuttle had sent to Boston for a physician. The county officials had charge of the premises and there was nothing for any one to do. Edith and David walked slowly to her house.

Edith had no one in the world, now, but her grandmother, and her grandmother was a very old woman who needed much care, and who could give little comfort to Edith. David could offer her no comfort that she would accept; in the days that followed he could not force himself on her.

Three days passed. William Coale was buried from his house, and again a curious throng lined the road and filled the house itself. Distant relatives took charge of the funeral, sparing Edith, and then went away again. Murray had disappeared; Reilly was about town, with headquarters at Portrain's jail. His duty was to converse with Sam Hughes; but no art or pleading of Reilly's had made Sam say a word more than he had said when he confessed.

There was a story about that Murray had talked with Walter Goodenough, but Walter denied it. He also denied that Murray had been at Sam's house, but Sam Hughes' mother would say nothing about it, one way or the other.

People said that Murray was still in Portrain, disguised, in the daytime, with a beard and mustache, and that he was prowling about at night, snooping in back yards and looking through people's windows, but all that was probably pure invention.

David resented the way in which Edith's distant cousins were with her constantly, till after the funeral. He wished that the Coxes had not again been in the North woods, far from reach of the news. David was an outsider; he had no claim on Edith, and she ignored him. He went to her two or three times, hoping that she would show at least a little pleasure at seeing him, but each time she was no more than polite and just a little formal, and David understood only too well. He had suspected her of killing her father, and she could never forgive him for that suspicion.

Therefore, David had much time on his hands, and he finished his story. In the story "Sam Hughes" killed "William Coale" in the still night, and saved his daughter, and no one ever knew who had done it, or even that it had not been an accident. Furthermore, there was no suspicion when "Sam Hughes" was found dead one morning, at the foot of a cliff by the sea. But when the story was written and sent to David's agent in New York, David believed that he knew who had killed William Coale in real life. And how simple it was! Why hadn't he thought of it before; why hadn't every one thought of it? The light broke on David as, he sat trying to make the young wife's actions clear and plausible in the story.

Sam Hughes had come to remonstrate with William. There had been hot words and Sam had threatened him. When he had gone, Sarah had come into the room and William had lost his temper. He had resented Sam's interference and told his wife that her

father must keep away, and accused her of having sent for him. She had denied it and he had told her she lied, and had struck her on the face with the handle of the hammer. Enraged beyond all control, the hatred that had been growing within her overpowered her, and she, a strong woman, had wrenched the hammer from him. In her frenzy she had struck to kill, and had killed, and William Coale, falling, had upset the table, and the lamp had blazed up. The girl saw the awful scene; then the curtains blazed, the smoke from the kerosene stifled her, and hid the chaos from her sight. She staggered backward with some vague instinct of self-preservation, or with the intention of calling for help. Perhaps she screamed. She lost her sense of direction and went into the back room instead of down the hall. Something in her brain snapped, she stumbled and fell where they found her, half on the floor, half on the couch.

But that would never do in the story.

David tried to find Murray, to tell his story of Sarah Coale, but he couldn't find him. Reilly, if he knew where Murray was, would not tell, but he said that he would be in Portrain in two or three days.

David went to Edith. He sat and talked with her but it was hard to talk to her, for she was very quiet and there was a far-away expression in her eyes, and David was very sure that she was not listening to what he said.

Another three days passed and David's time in Portrain was nearly at an end. He had made one attempt to tell Edith of his love, as she sat on the rocks by the sea, and she had not heard him but had gazed out across the water which was motionless with the dying day.

Back in Alden she had hated him, and she had loved him; she had lost her temper with him, and then put her hands in his and begged to be forgiven;



Edith uttered a sharp gasp, and her body relaxed and sank back against the dory.

she had called him hard names, and then told him that he was the soul of honor and the dearest man in the whole wide world. She would not let him touch her, yet she had put her arms around his neck and breathed cigarette smoke between his lips, and then when he had tried to kiss her she had broken away, and told him to be more careful of what he did.

In Portrain she had dropped her lunacy and had been herself—beautiful, wholesome, sincere, friendly, lovable; and despite her refusal of him, there had been about her a subtle charm, the ever-present suggestion that she confessed that she loved him, and was very happy. He believed that her refusal had been the natural, feminine sacrifice to modesty, which requires some show of hesitation.

But now there was no play acting, no sympathetic meeting of their minds and hearts, no banter, but instead cold, hard indifference. She told him, more plainly than words could ever tell, that if she had loved him, her love was

killed, that it was dead beyond all hope of ever blazing forth again.

Yet she was kind to him and tried to be pleasant. She walked and sailed with him, and sat beside him. But her idol was shattered—he had believed that she had had a hand in her own father's death.

On the evening of the third day, Murray came back. David was ready for bed when he heard his name called outside, and Murray asked if he could come in. He came upstairs and sat down.

"Have you finished your story?" he asked.

"Yes, mine's finished—is yours?" David said.

Murray smiled, lighted a cigar, and did not answer. "Let me read how it came out?" he asked.

"Read away, but that's fiction. When you've finished it, I'll tell you what really happened. Of course, I'm joking in a way, but I've got a hunch."

Again Murray said nothing, but took

the carbon copy of David's story and read the ending.

"A very fine bit of fiction," he said finally, laying it down. "Now, what really happened?"

David told him how Sarah Coale had killed her husband.

"Very clear, very clear, young man—you ought to write detective thrillers. Why didn't that explanation occur to you sooner?"

"Is it the right one?"

"If it is, how do you account for Miss Coale's being so near the house just afterward? She wasn't just out for a stroll, now was she? You must have been afraid of something, or you would have told me that you had seen her. Has she explained that walk to you yet?"

"No, she hasn't."

"H'm," murmured Murray, "that sounds bad. You haven't had any trouble, have you?"

"I'm afraid something's wrong. Miss Coale believes that I suspected her of—well, something wrong."

"And won't forgive you, even if what you did was to protect her? So—that's too bad." He looked at his watch. "I've got to go along. Cheer up, Dave, and don't tell any one you've seen me," and off he went without saying a word as to whether David's guess about Sarah Coale was right, or about anything else.

The next day no one spoke of having seen Murray. Mrs. Coale was still hovering between life and death, and had not spoken since the night of her husband's death; and Sam Hughes still refused to talk.

David went to Edith's and they went to walk. It seemed to David that she went with him as though she believed it was her duty to give herself every chance to forget what he had done, and to try to bring herself to look on him as she had, before that awful night. But

poor David was very unhappy, for he had very little hope.

They reached the beach and walked along it till they came to a dory on its side, high up on the sands. She sat down and leaned against it, and her eyes went roaming far across the water, with that ever-present, sad expression that was breaking David's heart. At last David found courage to speak of his love, but she stopped him quickly.

"Please, not now, Davy," she said, trying to smile.

"As you will, Edith, but you will let me soon?"

"Perhaps, but I am afraid not."

And so they sat, her eyes looking far beyond the steamers on the horizon, and his eyes searching her face for some sign that would give him hope.

They had been there an hour and the shadows were very long, when they saw a man coming along the beach toward them. He was walking slowly and apparently aimlessly, for he stopped constantly, picking up pebbles and tossing them into the water, or examining insignificant things on the sand. It was James Murray, and when he reached them he sat down with them as though he were glad to find some one to talk to.

"Well," he said, "I suppose you're both thinking up stories. I'm told you write stories, too, Miss Coale. I know Mr. Mott does."

"I don't write very good ones, Mr. Murray," she said. "They're not like Mr. Mott's."

Murray did not comment on that statement, but let handfuls of dry sand run slowly between his fingers.

"I suppose being able to write stories is a gift," he said, "like being able to sing or draw, but it seems to me that knowing things to write about would help a lot."

Neither David nor Edith spoke,

though Murray gave them plenty of time.

"Now I know a fine story," he went on, "but I couldn't write it to save my life. It's a case I had lately, one out of the ordinary run of things I have to investigate."

Again he waited, but no one spoke.

"A man was killed, a man about as old as your father, Miss Coale. No one had seen him killed and there was no direct evidence against any one, but the first thing I found out was that a man was seen to enter the premises, stay a short time and leave, say five minutes before the alarm was given. My informant said he was running, and jumped over the fence. *There* was something to investigate! The man was identified and refused to admit the fact voluntarily. When taxed with it specifically, he admitted it at once.

"It happened that the man was one of the first to reach the house after the discovery of trouble, and as I questioned him, I saw unmistakable evidence that he was holding something back. It is, of course, dangerous to place too much confidence in a man's appearance of honesty, but there couldn't be much question about this one. The only conclusion was that he was protecting some one; and it's always a pretty safe conclusion, under such conditions, that that some one is a woman and that he's in love with her.

"It turned out a little later that he had seen a woman who had apparently just left the house, and was certainly leaving the premises. It was not until an hour after he saw her that he asked himself why the girl had been there, or what she had been doing. When that question flashed through his mind, it had only one effect. He did not reason; he did not analyze what had happened; he did not analyze the girl herself. He never worried on his own account; it made no difference to him whether the girl had done anything

wrong or not, nothing could influence his love for her; he simply knew that, come what might, he would protect her. And he did what he could to protect her. He lied, and he let suspicion fall on himself, and never gave it a thought.

"I am telling you of this particular case because it is typical of others that I have known, where one human being will lie and keep back things at the greatest personal peril, simply through all-consuming love for the one to be shielded. You have no idea how much trouble perfectly innocent people cause that way. In this case, the minute I knew the man was lying, I set out to find the woman he loved. I watched him and, of course, I found out quickly enough, and all I had to do was to check up the woman's story, and the man went out of the case. Naturally, as soon as the man had time to think calmly, he knew the woman could not possibly have had anything to do with it. The story lies in a man's instinct to save, in the crisis, the woman he loves, and to cast every other consideration to the winds. There ought to be some fine stuff for a story in that. I don't explain it very well, but I think you understand."

Murray rose and stood before them for an instant, sand slowly running between his fingers. His eyes were on Edith Coale. At first she was looking past him to the sails on the horizon, but she felt his eyes drawing hers, and she glanced at him. Then her eyes fell.

Murray brushed the sand from his hands. "Well," he said, "I must go along, and I'll say good-by, for I don't think I shall see you again, but—perhaps—before I do—you'd like to hear the rest of the story, the part that's not worth writing about.

"It turned out this way. The old man was fixing a shade, when his wife's father came to see him. The old man went into the other room, unconsciously carrying the hammer with him. The

relations between the two men were not pleasant, and there were hot words. Finally the man left, and, for some reason that we don't know and which is unimportant, his daughter came into the room, and her husband—well, we don't know what her husband said, but we presume that he lost his temper and was in a violent rage.

"Suddenly an expression of great fear took the place of his expression of anger. He reached for the table for support, fell, and knocked the lamp to the floor. As he fell his temple struck against the sharp edge of the window sill. He had overturned the table, which was very light; the hammer which he had put on it had slid off it, and was found under him. His wife tried to do something for him, but the blazing oil overcame her. She staggered from the room, striking her cheek against the edge of the door.

"So you see there is nothing to write about in that part of the story. The old man died of heart disease, angina pectoris."

Edith uttered a sharp gasp, and her body relaxed and sank back against the dory. Murray spoke again, and his voice was so low they could hardly hear him.

"And we found, too, that his peculiar actions, his hasty temper, his seeming cruelty were not of his heart, but were due to pressure on his brain from an injury he had received and had never told about—perhaps that he did not know about. But the poor man must have suffered for a long time and suffered torture, and he is very happy now.

"I must really go this time," Murray said. "I must go and send Sam Hughes back to his house, whether he wants to leave the old jail or not."

And Murray strode away and disappeared over the dunes.

Edith and Davy sat as they were, Edith's eyes on the white sails of a

schooner far out on the bay, and David's eyes on hers and the two tears that rolled slowly down her cheeks. It was a long time before she spoke, and when she did she said just, "Davy," but that one word was all he needed. He did not have to see her eyes or her blushing cheeks to know that at last all was well for him and her.

They were walking home hours later when she said, "Murray made me tell him why I took a walk that night. Did he tell you?" There was no sadness now, no reserve, no looking at things miles away and not seeing them.

"No, he didn't."

"Did you ask him?"

"No, I don't think I did. Suppose you tell me."

"It's not a bit tragic, and the reason is not exactly of the bashful, modest-maiden sort, but Lor' love me, Davy, there isn't any more of that, is there? When I shut the door that night on the brute who once upon a time had had a black eye, I felt terribly alone. I wanted him, and I went after him to tell him so, and when I didn't find him, I started home across people's back lots, so no one would see me; I was so ashamed."

"Doing wrong never pays."

"Did I do wrong, Davy?"

"No, I did; I hooked somebody's apples, and see what happened."

"But aren't you happy, Davy?"

"Happy! But I wasn't an hour or two ago."

Grandmother was not surprised. "The minute I saw you, young man," she said, "I wrote two old maid cousins of mine, one generation below me, that if they wanted a good home, they could have it right here, provided they were willing to put up with my ways and help a mite when I got too old to do everything myself. They're coming." So that was settled. She gave David some good advice. "Treat her decently

and you'll have the best girl in the world. Treat her any other way and you'll have your hands full. She's a Stevens, and the Stevens women are proud and know what they deserve, even if you wouldn't think so to look at me—but I'm not a Stevens, am I, even though I have borne the name for quite a while! But I guess you'll do, and I think you'll be easy for her to manage—big men usually are. I hope so; that's the best way!"

They finished supper, and Edith insisted on going for the evening mail.

"Forget the mail," David exclaimed. "It'll keep, and it's very pleasant here!"

"Are you going to be managed, or aren't you?" Edith laughed. "A lot depends on your answer."

They went for the evening mail.

There was a letter for David and several for Edith. David read his and Edith read one of hers. David's was this:

DEAR MOTT: Has anything happened? Are you well? I've just read "John Todd," and I'm worried about you. Even in your early days you never perpetrated anything one-tenth as rotten as this. It's no more like your usual stuff than black is like white. Seriously, when you're normal again, read it, and I'm sure you'll agree with me. I think there's a bully good story in it somewhere, but you've hidden it cleverly. Let me hear from you. I'm worried.

It was signed by David's agent.

"What's the matter, Davy?" Edith had seen David's blank astonishment.

"Matter?" he muttered. "Nothing's the matter—why?"

"No bad news—you're sure?"

David burst into so loud a laugh that the other people in the dim little post office turned to look at him.

"Well, maybe it's bad news," he said, "but somehow it strikes me as funny! Let's get out of here."

They got out and all the way home Edith tried to find out what was in David's letter. When they were indoors, he showed it to her. It did not seem to interest her particularly.

"All in the day's work, Davy dear. You mustn't be discouraged! Read this; perhaps it will cheer you up." She drew a letter from her waist and sat on the arm of David's chair. "Read it carefully, Davy." And David read:

DEAR MISS COALE: The *Brown Book* likes your "Oasis" very much, as I was sure they would. They have offered five hundred dollars for it, which I have accepted. The story itself is fine, but better still, it is told straightforwardly and simply, without the wanderings that used to be so troublesome. Your characters are finely drawn, the narrative is clear, and the conversation just right. The *Brown Book* has asked to have first chance at your future work. May I congratulate you on what I know is the beginning of great success?

It was signed by the same man who had signed David's letter.

"Oh, Davy," Edith cried, "of course, there's not going to be any genius in the family, but there will be some talent, won't there?"

David looked up at her and grinned.

"Unless there are too many distractions," he said.



Somehow, Jimmie got to
his feet.



Maisie's Miracle

By Eliza Kent

Author of "Foghorn and Flute,"
"Sweet Peas," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

No—it doesn't end at all as you think it's going to.

THE Sandersons lived in a red stone apartment, which had a cunning little sun parlor at the north. In the sun parlor were French-mirrored doors and really good wood-work, which only made the Sanderson furniture seem all the more dingy. But the two Sanderson hearts, beating as one, smiled on the dingy furniture, for, as Maisie said, it means a good deal to live in a fine neighborhood, and it does—especially to one's pocketbook.

Down in the Loop Jimmie Sanderson was second assistant to the assistant sales manager of a big steel and con-

crete company, at twenty-five hundred a year—a miserly salary for so important a man and so important a position, according to Maisie. For didn't Jimmie do two men's work, year in and year out?

Sooner or later there cometh to all men the shock of opportunity, and one afternoon Jimmie received a summons to old Lancaster's private office, old Lancaster being the cold, calculating, and sinnerful president of the afore-said steel and concrete company. For a moment Jimmie's heart thumped painfully, and a worried line came

between his boyish eyes. He had been trying to saddle enough courage to ask for a raise—Maisie thought he certainly deserved one. Was he, instead, to lose his job? He turned and went toward the private office, abrupt and resigned.

"Sit down, Sanderson," said Lancaster. "I want to talk over a little matter with you. I presume it's rumored around the plant that Wells will take Smith's job the first of March—and the ten thousand a year—eh?"

"Why, I believe that's the general thought," Jimmie replied, the worried line between his eyes giving place to mild curiosity. "Naturally, the boys suppose he'll be Smith's successor, though I don't think there's been much said, one way or another."

"Well, they suppose wrong," the chief growled. "Wells has been making four thousand and a jump to ten thousand would be a pretty fine thing for him. And, in some ways, he's a good man for the place. Then, after Wells, comes Brandican. But I've eliminated Brandican—lacks ability. After Brandican, comes you. Now—just a minute! The man who takes the sales managership must be worthy of confidence, have sound judgment, and not live above his means. I'd heard Wells was extravagant and in debt, and the only way I had of finding out was to invite myself out to dinner with him. Show me a man's parlor, his wife, and his table, and I'll tell you who he is. Well, I went last night and found him living like a ten-thousand-a-year man! His apartment was an extravagant one, his wife dressed like a queen, and we sat down to a dinner fit for a millionaire. Six courses—and not expecting company! Why, hang it, man, do you know what we serve at our house for supper? Milk and mush, man—milk and mush—a good enough supper for a king! For a four-thousand man to live like a ten-thousand man shows lack of both judgment and honesty, because

he can't get those things except by going into debt. Therefore, Wells doesn't get the job. I've been told that aside from having a somewhat expensive flat, you live modestly, and that your wife is a sensible woman. It lacks but a half hour until closing time—may I invite myself to dinner with you to-night? I must give you the same test I have given Wells."

Somehow, Jimmie got to his feet. His heart beat horribly, but he felt like a man who had had a sudden glimpse of heaven.

"I'd be proud to have you, Mr. Lancaster!" he cried. "I'd—I'd consider it an honor. I'm not afraid of any test, and there's not a more sensible wife than mine anywhere, if I do say it. Just let me phone her—I always let her know when I'm going to bring any one with me."

"Sure," agreed Lancaster, handing him the phone. "Tell her we will be out in my car in forty-five minutes from now."

Like one in a dream, Jimmie gave his number, and like one in a dream, he heard Maisie's voice float dulcely over the wire.

"Maisie, dear," he said, trying hard to control the joy and excitement in his voice, "I'm at the office here, with Mr. Lancaster, and Mr. Lancaster is coming home to dinner with me. We will be—yes, dear, *Mr. Lancaster*—we will be out in his car in about forty-five minutes."

Maisie's voice began to babble like a brook. There were rapid exclamations of surprise and dismay.

"I've nothing ready! The worst meal in weeks. Oh, can't you put him off until another day—it's too late to prepare anything now! I can't—"

"Oh, that's all right," soothed Jimmie. "Mr. Lancaster realizes that you weren't expecting company. Don't worry—we're going to make home

folks of him to-night. Good-by—we'll be there in three-quarters of an hour," and he hung up the receiver, afraid to talk further.

"She's flustered because it's too late to prepare for company," he said, smiling broadly. "So you'll have to take us in our every-day clothes."

"What's good enough for you is good enough for me," Lancaster replied. "Now, as to Wells, I'd liked to have had him in as sales manager, because he's a capable chap. Of course, I've had my eye on both you and Brandican, and that was a good dicker you made with the Johnson people—a splendid dicker! So I think from the standpoint of salesmanship, you'll do. Brandican won't; he's high as he can go. But we shall see, we shall see! I've several splendid applications for the position, but, as you know, it's our policy to promote our own men, when it's possible."

Jimmie's head was in a whirl while he talked; and mixed with steel and concrete were visions of a new apartment, new rugs, an automobile, a great new fur coat for Maisie—one of those five-hundred-dollar fellows that would come clear to the bottom of her skirt. Poor, dear Maisie, who had borne their poverty so beautifully, with never a complaining word, never a murmur, God bless her.

"Mr. Lancaster," he said, "I don't want something that doesn't belong to me, but I do want to say, position or no position, you'll see my home to-night just as I see it every night. You'll see my table spread as my wife spreads it every day. We live a simple life—though I'd like to have better!"

"It's all right to have better," Lancaster growled, "when you can afford better. It's this eternal squandering I can't stand—this trying to look a little better and eat a little more than your neighbor."

It was bitter cold, but what cared

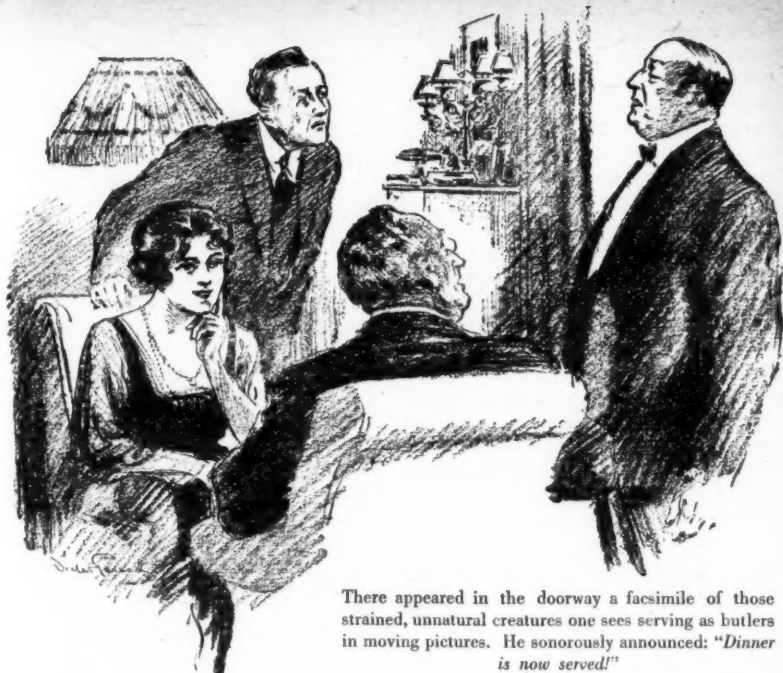
Jimmie for sleet and snow as he sailed down the boulevard in Lancaster's big machine, when Maisie and home and a ten-thousand job were before him? As usual, he had his key with him, but he decided to push the button in the vestibule—they lived on the second floor—so that Maisie might know as quickly as possible that they had arrived. When they reached his own door, however, it was opened noiselessly by a demure little maid, dressed in regulation black, with a spotless white apron about her dainty little waist, and a handful of lace perched high upon her pert little head. Jimmie, open-mouthed, looked at her.

"Er—where is Mrs. Sanderson?" he asked in a fluttered voice, his heart beginning to beat and swell with a nameless misery.

"In the parlor, sir," curtsied the maid.

Just three steps to the right was the parlor door, and before Jimmie could collect his wits, he had pushed Lancaster toward the parlor and was conscious that Maisie stood in the center of the room, smiling happily. And then it seemed he was not—and yet he was—in his own little parlor. He had a confused sense of Oriental rugs he had never before seen—of velvet cushions—bric-a-brac—rose-shaded lamps—and oh! where under heavens did Maisie get the wonderful dress and equally wonderful necklace? He was making a cyclonic effort to regain his mental equilibrium, when there appeared in the doorway a facsimile of those strained, unnatural creatures one sees serving as butlers in moving pictures. He sonorously announced: "*Dinner is now served!*"

Writhing inwardly like a man at the stake, Jimmie followed his wife and Mr. Lancaster into the dining room. Here he looked around with strange curiosity, as perhaps a man lost in the desert looks upon the miles of burning



There appeared in the doorway a facsimile of those strained, unnatural creatures one sees serving as butlers in moving pictures. He sonorously announced: "*Dinner is now served!*"

sand. The room was transformed. The sideboard and table glistened with silver and crystal he had never before seen; candles burned under soft-colored shades; savory odors assailed his nostrils. And then followed a dinner—how many courses he never knew—with the strange maid and the strange butler flitting here and there like butterflies in a gorgeous rose garden. And Maisie? She was calm and smiling through it all, as if it were a daily affair with her.

Sixty minutes or so later—though to Jimmie it seemed sixty aeons—he beheld, as in a dream, Mr. Lancaster depart; and as the door closed behind his august employer, Jimmie's legs began gently to crumple up. Then he felt Maisie's arms about his neck.

"Wasn't it a miracle," she asked

triumphantly, "a truly wonderful miracle?"

"Why, y-y-yes, my dear, it was," he smiled weakly, sinking into a chair that he felt sure he recognized as one of his own. "Yes, it—it was a wonderful miracle! A—a great miracle! And only forty-five minutes! How'd you do it?"

"Well, you see, honey, when you phoned, I sensed instantly you were in a pickle and couldn't say anything, and, of course, I knew it would never do to let the rich Mr. Lancaster see how bare and poorly off we are. So the first thing I did was to run across the hall and ask Mrs. Fero's advice, and she helped me arrange it all. Oh, she was lovely! She just *made* me wear this beautiful new dress of hers—it cost a hundred and seventy-five at Shipper's

—and this necklace, and—but wait, I've got a memorandum of everything—”

“A memorandum?”

“Yes—here it is. The silver knives, forks, and spoons, iridescent glassware, velvet cushions, and Meta, belong to Mrs. Fero; the fruit punch and butler to Mrs. Bayne—he's her chauffeur, you know, dressed in your Tuxedo. The rugs are Jennie Sprague's, who lives in the apartment below—Mrs. Fero borrowed them while I dressed—and the roast, olives, pickles, homemade rolls, and cake are from the delicatessen down at the corner—Meta and James got them for us. The lamp, candlesticks and soup, all ready to be served, came from Mrs. Smith; and the ice cream we got at the drug store. Oh, I know Mr. Lancaster was impressed!”

“I know so, too,” sighed Jimmie. “I

saw it all over his face. Yeh—I should say he was wonderfully and profoundly impressed, honey! And only forty-five minutes! Yeh!”

“Well, let's get these things back, dearie,” she said, mildly puzzled, “and then we'll talk the whole thing over. I—I just know there's something in the wind.”

“Darling,” replied Jimmie slowly, “let's not be in a hurry about getting them back—let's enjoy 'em for awhile—it'll probably be our last chance for a spell. As to the wind, it's from the east, and there's lots of shiver in it! And say, honey—get out your guitar and play that funny little fandango thing I like so well—you remember, the one that makes you dance whether you want to or not. That's—that's a great little piece, honey!”



CUPID

MOONSHINE and starshine and falling dew
And an old, old garden, made strangely new
Because of a maid in a linen gown
And an eager youth from the nearby town,
And a little Lad with a bended bow
Whose presence the lovers do not know.

Moonshine and starshine and whispering breeze
And a grass-grown path 'neath the maple trees,
And hands that clasp in the shadows gray
And lips that meet with no word to say,
And Cupid winging an arrow keen
From a rose-tree bough where he waits unseen.

Moonshine and starshine and clouds that swim
In an over-ocean, uncertain and dim,
A world of beauty and thrill and charm,
And a maiden clasped in her lover's arm,
As an arrow, sent from a wingéd bow,
Pierces two hearts that never know.

L. M. THORNTON.

Notwithstanding Precedent

By Winona Godfrey

Author of "Her Own Price," "The Precious Hour," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MARSHALL FRANTZ

A story that might have been an old one, but that is really refreshingly new.

THE Allison's were worried about Ross. That was one of the penalties of being Ross B. Allison, "our only son." They had worried—they called it "discussing and deciding"—about his first teeth, his second teeth, his short trousers, his long trousers, his mumps, his curls, his going to school, his changing voice, his taste in neckties, his playing football, his working in "the store," and everything else that goes to make up the life of a normal boy up to the age of twenty-four. Then they began to worry, or rather kept on—for they had started it when he was nineteen—about his future wife! And without doubt it was the spiciest, the most "galumphious" worry of all.

The girls Ross went with in West Corkip were simply impossible. The impending calamity of calling Prissy Jones or Althea Preston or Betty McCann "daughter-in-law" kept Mamma Allison's spirits secretly dank. What! Our Ross bestowing his godlike self on Prissy Jones or Betty McCann! Unthinkable! They would leave a house and lot, an established stationery business, and West Corkip itself, first! They were not sure that West Corkip wouldn't tip right up when Ross stepped off, but there is a law about self-preservation.

Just then a neat legacy, so opportune that it seemed sent by Heaven, reached them. Specifically, it was from Mrs. Allison's Uncle Hannibal, although there was no reason why Heaven itself should not intervene in the vast business of Ross Allison's mate. The legacy

lent a firmer color to their flight. The real motive of it was not suspected even by Ross.

That the family scheme should jibe so amazingly with his own desire seemed miraculous to that young gentleman. He was tired of West Corkip, was not violently attached to the stationery business, and, contrary to the family apprehension, did not leave his heart behind in the keeping of any Corkip damsel. Ross was not at all a bad sort. He had not attributed to his good looks undue importance since the day when he had persuaded the barber to rid him of his curls, thereby treading on his mother's heart for the first time. He had no bad habits except playing the banjo and shooting his cuffs. In short, he was a nice boy without much initiative. It would have been remarkable if he had had initiative, considering the perennial family pressure.

Behold, then, Papa and Mamma Allison and "our only son," Ross B., transplanted from West Corkip to Los Angeles! Here it seemed likely that Heaven was still watchful, for papa at once ran into his old schoolmate, Jonathan Shedd, who had a flourishing stationery shop and who, having no son, was looking for a partner! And not only that, the house next to Mr. Shedd's house was for sale! And not only that, but Mr. Shedd had a modest and charming daughter!

The firm straightway became "Shedd & Allison." Mr. Allison bought the house next door, and young Mr. Allison began to walk out and to sit in with Miss



"Marjorie's all right, but I happen to be going with another girl."

Marjorie. Now for the first time the Allison's smiled a welcome to young romance. Here at last was a suitable match for "our Ross," or at least as nearly suitable as they were ever likely to encounter. There was the business, into the sole possession of which Ross would eventually come as the husband of Marjorie. There were the Shedd's, whom they knew to be of good stock, and there was Marjorie, a pretty, lady-like young person, apparently of domestic tastes, and just the right shape

and size for a suitable wife. A stranger in filmdom's capital, it was natural for Ross to sit on Marjorie's veranda and take her to the movies and to the beaches and on the other young errands where youth craves a companion, preferably of the other sex. And Papa Shedd winked at Papa Allison and Papa Allison offered Papa Shedd a twenty-five-cent cigar. But—did anybody ever mention "lute" to you without whispering "rift" in your other ear? It was this way:

In the employ of Shedd & Allison was one William J. Tucker, commonly called "Bill." Bill thought of himself as a giddy youth and the adjective pleased him extremely. His twinkling eye fell in a friendly manner on the heir presumptive of Shedd & Allison, who in a friendly manner twinkled back; and shortly Bill invited the youth from West Corkip to step out with him and get acquainted.

Thus it came about that Ross Allison was introduced to Vere Desmond.

You can imagine what it was to a young gentleman from West Corkip to meet Vere Desmond. Of course he had seen her often in the movies, and while she was not a star of the very first magnitude, her particular admirers were ardently loyal to their favorite. Also, she was not really beautiful, but she could in some way entirely convince you that she was. The amazing part to Ross was that she acted just like anybody.

"I've always thought yours such a pretty name," he got out, thinking a personal compliment necessary, yet too shy to make it more personal.

"Yes," she agreed. "Suitable and artistic. Theatrical, of course, but I wanted that. Something with class, but easy to pronounce. And I used some restraint, too, don't you think? Might have made it Vere de Vere or Vera Vanester or something like that."

There was a hint of laughter on her lips and no hint about it in her eyes. Ross laughed, too.

"Do you know, it suits you so well, I thought it was your own."

"I'll take it as a compliment," said she.

Her escort, a tall, bald young man had gone to telephone while Bill and Ross lingered at the table. Now he came hurrying back.

"There was a telegram for me," he explained to Vere. "Peg will be in at eleven. I'll have to beat it. Want to

go, or rather one of the boys would take you home later?"

"You run along, Ben," Vere advised. "I guess Mr. Allison will see me home."

That young man turned a rapturous pink.

"Delighted, I'm sure," said he.

"All right, then," said Ben. "Awfully sorry. See you later."

"Give my love to Peggy," said Miss Desmond. "It's his wife," she explained. "Awfully sweet girl. Bridge out somewhere and Ben thought her train wouldn't be in till morning. The little girl in the pink hat is trying to catch your eye, Billy."

Billy answered the summons with some reluctance and our hero was left—the cavalier of Vere Desmond! It certainly made him feel a devil of a fellow. She had chosen him, a stranger, instead of Billy or any of the other fellows who kept coming to speak to her. He actually knew an actress! He was here at a beach café with *Vere Desmond*. If West Corkip could only see him now! And "Ben" was a married man—in West Corkip that sort of thing isn't done at all! Miss Desmond went on telling what a nice boy Ben was; that some day, when he got his chance, he was going to be one of the big directors.

After Ross had told her all about himself, she suggested going.

"A little of this goes such a long way," she said. "I want to come, and when I'm here I want to go. I suppose Ben didn't take my car."

Ben hadn't taken it, and Ross thought he could drive it all right. It was some car! And, of course, there is nothing "heady" in speeding through the California moonlight with a well-known actress by your side!

Vere Desmond had a bungalow in Hollywood and a housekeeper, and a maid sitting up for her. Ross was impressed. Imagine a girl no older than he having a house and a car and all that! He was getting twenty-five a

week, and he was a *man*! That old stationery business! Miss Desmond thanked him and he assured her that the pleasure was his. In the approved Corkip style he asked permission to call and she told him to "run in any time."

That was the simple way the whole, hideous business started.

Ross didn't have any more sense than to chortle all through breakfast about driving Vere Desmond home, and how beautiful she was, and what a dandy car she had, and what a nifty bungalow, and what a stunner she was, and how cute was her Pomeranian, and all of it.

Papa and Mamma Allison didn't think so much of it at the moment. They thought it was an interesting encounter because they went to the movies themselves. They did not begin to think until two nights later when Ross came out to where they were sitting on the veranda, saying he guessed he'd take the old boat and make a call, if they didn't mind. They didn't, thinking he meant to take Marjorie, and they admired his new suit and his new hat and his new tie and his new shoes. Marjorie came out on her own porch just as he climbed into the family car and went off without even seeing her.

And thus the nice boy from West Corkip became the slave of Vere Desmond, to the consternation of his family and the complete satisfaction of himself.

Mamma Allison thought she'd try diplomacy.

"Aren't you rather neglecting Marjorie lately, son?"

Ross grinned.

"Why, we're not married!"

"Why, Ross! Marjorie was your first girl friend here. You don't want to offend her, surely!"

"Marjorie's all right, but I happen to be going with another girl."

"You mean—Miss Desmond? They are hardly to be mentioned together, are they?"

"No, they're really not," Ross was

positive. "Vere is worth about ten thousand Marjories."

"Ross! Really! I can't let you make such a statement."

"Why not? I suppose you think I'm being vamped, eh?"

"Ross!"

"Aw, now, mother, be reasonable. You've got an old-fashioned idea that an actress is a terrible person."

Mrs. Allison was vaguely suspicious of "advanced" women, but she hated to be called "old-fashioned" herself.

"Young people," she said severely, "are likely to think the wholesome ideas of their elders old-fashioned. They think less normal people in much less wholesome walks of life very interesting and romantic. It is a symptom of inexperience." Mother Allison's diplomacy usually fizzled like that. "And I do hope you won't get into extravagant ways, Ross. I read the other day where Miss Desmond spent several thousand dollars for clothes for one picture."

"Well, clothes are part of the business. Anyway, she makes lots of money! She doesn't throw it all away, either! She's buying a dandy ranch. She says the time to make hay is while the sun shines, and it's shining for her now, all right. She's young and beautiful and popular, and she says those are things that don't last forever, so she's paying a great deal more attention to the hay than anybody gives her credit for."

He thought it was mighty cute of her, but it was written on Mother Allison's face that to her it only showed what a calculating creature the hussy was. Son read and was fired.

"Of course, she couldn't do anything to suit you!" he cried angrily, and stalked out of the house.

Mother hadn't helped things a great deal. She and Papa discussed it at length at night. He said Jonathan did not approve of things either. He had expressed himself as being disap-



"I know—I've nothing to give you, Vere—I mean—I'm nobody much. And you—I—but I love you so——"

pointed in Ross. He had hoped he was a steadier sort. Maybe he needed a firmer rein. Papa Allison, secretly doubtful of his own grip on that firmer rein, had tried to smooth things over with the "boys will be boys" argument. It was just a boyish and entirely temporary entanglement such as all boys have a turn at. After it was over he would appreciate a nice girl and wholesome things. Nothing to worry about.

The Vere Desmonds never stay interested for long in penniless boys. Ross wasn't a fool! He'd get his eyes opened!

Mother was cheered. She recalled numberless stories she had read and plays and pictures she had seen in which this was a favorite subject. Always the hero returned to his simple sweetheart, sadder and wiser, realizing that "homespun hearts are happiest," or

something to that effect. Often he was cleverly disillusioned by those who had his happiness at heart. A preferred method was to invite the enchantress to the hero's simple home where, beside the highbred winsomeness of his boyhood sweetheart, her coarse ways and selfish exaction appeared to superb disadvantage. Mother Allison trusted that they would not be obliged to take these extreme measures, and fell hopefully to sleep.

Ross awoke this Sunday with a song on his lips, figuratively anyway, and it became literally a wonderful thing while he dressed with extreme care—for he was to spend the day with Vere. As a matter of fact, that affair was by no means in the advanced stages conceded it by the Shedd and Allisons.

With Marjorie in the foreground cutting roses, and his disapproving parents in the background, the immaculate Ross departed—by street car, because he couldn't deprive the family of its Sunday trip. He didn't amount to much or he'd have a car of his own! Gosh! If he could just make some money!

Vere was out on her lawn with her Pomeranian Beppo, called "Pip" for short. She looked wonderfully fresh and girlish, having—she explained—been in bed at nine o'clock last night. They had finished the picture yesterday and she had been "dead." But her girlishness was not the girlishness of Marjorie. It had the physical freshness of youth and the vividness of an extraordinary vitality, but the ingenuousness, the inexperience of the "sheltered" daughter were not to be seen in the poise and the more subtle signs of experience delicately but quite legibly written on this young woman of the world. Every turn of her head, every movement of her wonderful body, was exactly graceful as the result of that technique which becomes in its perfection unstudied and natural. Marjorie looked at one frankly and one read in

her eyes the inconsequent sum of her knowledge. Vere seemed also to look at one as frankly, but her eyes printed no sum total for one's edification. They merely said in an intriguing manner: "I know—a great deal."

Vere was a child of the stage. She had been born in Africa on the "world tour" of a fourth-magnitude "star" in whose support her frivolously wicked father and gayly good mother were enlisted. While Marjorie was making paper stars in a kindergarten, Vere, in the spotlights of two hemispheres, was lisping, "Papa, kiss mamma!" And while Marjorie was giggling through grammar school, Vere was declaiming and posturing and skimming textbooks in a Southern convent. And when at seventeen, Marjorie was going to Sunday-school picnics properly chaperoned by mamma, Vere was facing the world alone. Of the energy, shrewdness, and persistence that had brought her to her present position, there was very little visible now as she explained to Pip why he must respect the dignity of the neighbor's cat.

"What shall we do to-day?" she asked Ross, sitting beside her.

"Whatever you want." In his voice and eyes was that youthful, adoring submission that is so amusing and pathetic.

"Shall we go out to the ranch?"

"If you want to."

She laughed softly. "Are you always going to do just as I want?"

That "always" made his heart leap.

"Yes," he said eagerly.

She shook her head. "It's very unlikely. Let's go, though. You get out the car while I change my dress."

She came back shortly, dressed in a simple little sport costume which had probably cost about a hundred and fifty dollars. She decided that she would drive, after breaking Pip's heart entirely by making him stay at home. Ross liked to drive himself; still, he could watch the small firm hands on the

wheel, the shapely foot on the "gas," the way her hair grew on her neck, the laughing glances she stole from the road to send him.

People they passed recognized her and stared and commented, and he was always conscious of it, although she never seemed to be. It somehow excited him a little, and still he didn't quite like it. He resented it in a way that made him want to take her in his arms and stand between her and all those curious eyes and mouths. And she, of course, knew many people, and these all stared at him curiously. He was glad when, drawing up at the side of the road, she said: "You drive a while." They changed seats and for a moment her breath was on his cheek and her hand brushing his—and he was so careful that she was comfortable—

Vere's ranch was not just a plaything; it was a going concern. She showed it to Ross with businesslike gravity.

"You see, I know all about the improvidence of artists," she said. "So I'm taking advantage of everybody's denial that the movies are art. My father and mother were both temperamental, and consequently I had to face quite a few unpleasant facts when I was a mere infant. So while my sun shines I'm making hay, Ross—in the good old California sun!"

"You're wonderful!" said Ross.

"Why? Because I save some of my money? Do you suppose that's why I'll never be—really great? Genius hasn't any balance wheel, but then neither have lots of people I know who aren't geniuses, either. Ben says I lack *abandon*—" She laughed a little. "That awfully good hold on myself, he says, keeps my talent from being something more."

"More!" cried her worshiper disdainfully.

"Anyway," said she, "I know what I want, and I generally get it. Don't you?"

"Why—" He suddenly looked at himself as he never had. "Things have been easy for me, haven't they? You know, I never realized that before. I've done about as I pleased, and I've never wanted anything much, I guess."

Ross was interested in this new point of view. He would have gone on just the same—line of least resistance—being a stationer like his father—marrying somebody handy—like Marjorie. He'd never set his jaw and gone after a thing. He looked down the rows of orange trees hung with golden fruit, the air heavily sweet with the fragrance of blossoms, larks calling, mocking birds trilling. He looked at the expensive silken stuff of Vere's gown beside his ready-made suit, at her white hands, the round softness of her throat, her face that he could never quite read.

"I want you," he said. She did not move or speak. "I know—I've nothing to give you, Vere—I mean—I'm nobody much. And you—I—but I love you so—"

The speech was wholly boyish, so sincere, unpracticed, *dear*. Those pink ears of hers had received a voluminous lot of protestations—which were not unpracticed. But there was nothing of all that experience in her very low voice:

"Do you, dear?"

He put out a trembling hand and touched her wrist, and her hand promptly slipped into his. Yes, the stars do sing together! Ross distinctly heard them as his lips pressed the sweetest mouth in the world. It was quite too wonderful to be true that she could care for *him*—which showed how really young he was. He earnestly urged her to tell him why.

She laughed.

"Because you're such a darling goose!"

"Vere, you—you'll really be my—wife?" The wonder, the reverence, the adoration, he could put into that word!

Slow tears welled up in the wise

eyes of the wise young woman who heard him.

"I don't believe you've ever said that to another girl!" There was wonder in her voice, too.

"Of course not!"

"Oh, honey boy, I guess that's why I love you! You're so different from all the men I've known!"

"And you're so different from all the girls I've known!" he vowed.

Wonderful day! They had dinner served by a grinning Japanese boy in the charming dining room—with entrées of swift, stolen kisses, sweet meeting of fingers—Vere explaining how "we" would do this and that—*we!*

And then going home in the late afternoon, Ross driving, Vere leaning just a *little* against his shoulder! In town he had to stop to let a street car go by. Another car drew in beside them and in it were his father and mother and Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Shedd and Miss Marjorie.

"Who?" asked Vere at his lifted cap and the general but stiff response to his greeting.

"The folks," said Ross briefly.

"Oh!" The monosyllable as well as her lifted eyebrows expressed enlightenment. "And the pretty little girl?"

He explained very carefully, and didn't understand her little laugh.

Now when a young man comes in late on a moonlight night, walking with his head among the stars, his feet spurning the ground—"and on his lips like some red rose the kiss of Columbine"—it is a jar to find papa waiting up. Papa Allison called to Ross from the living room, put away his glasses, filled his pipe, and said he would like to speak with him.

"Ross, you've always been a good boy," he began. "You've always been a comfort to us, and you know, son, that all we think of is your happiness."

From this original introduction Ross knew what he was in for.

They had debated, said papa, whether

it would be wise to try to show Ross another point of view with regard to his acquaintance with—er—Miss Desmond. It was not only that they had all hoped that he and Marjorie—But had he looked into the future? Had he realized that romantic love is at best an evanescent thing? A man should go into marriage thoughtfully, not merely emotionally. Ross belonged to respectable, home-loving people. He was in a pleasant business that held no possibilities of wealth. Every worthwhile young man expects to marry, to have a home of his own, to become a right-living citizen, and the wise young man selects a wife of his own class, not one used to an extravagant scale of living which he can't hope to supply, but one who will be a companion and a helpmate. The man who marries radically outside his class courts social and financial disaster—

"But—what's money—or suitability—when we just want—each other?"

Father looked at son hopelessly. What is the use of talking to youth about things the importance of which youth can't seem to understand at all! Age is always shouting suitability into the deaf ear of young love—a deafness wholly curable, but requiring no remedies but time and experience. Papa would grab time, then. He begged his son to wait—wait—

Ross felt that his romance was really romantic because it seemed to have in it the element of tragedy. Literature assured him that such experiments always turn out badly. He fell asleep, however, to dream of Vere's cleft chin.

His heart was marvelously light in the morning, and he spoke cheerily to Marjorie who was, as frequently, in her front yard when he left the house. She put a flower in his buttonhole and looked up at him with large demure eyes, saying she was going to "help mother to-day" instead of going to the *matinée*. She knew that he was in the Lorelei's toils, but that it would all

come out right. It always does. He said it was a very sweet little rose—but downtown he went to a jeweler's where he made out a check that left his bank balance a tottering wreck.

That afternoon he was called to the office where sat his father and Mr. Shedd looking very important—as if, indeed, they were about to put something over. It seemed Mr. Shedd had some business interests that required somebody's

They wanted to get him out of the way—out of Vere's way. That was one of the tried methods, too. During his absence things would work themselves out. Sometimes they bought the siren off, or, freed from her spell, the hero found himself, realized that he had been infatuated, and returned to call on—
Marjorie.



making a trip to New York and possibly other places. It might take a couple of months and Jonathan didn't feel like taking the time himself. They had decided to let Ross go. It would be a fine trip for him—he'd never been to New York—be a great experience for him; and if he put the thing over, he would make a neat little sum besides.

Of course, Ross saw through it.

Ross said he didn't know that he cared to undertake such a long trip. The elder gentlemen gave him until morning to decide, but they *expected* him to go.

She let every man see just how wonderful she thought he was in his particular line.

In the twilight Ross went out to Hollywood through streets generously decorated with billboards displaying Vere Desmond, whereon the Potentate Film Company shrieked that it was presenting "Everybody's darling, the beautiful, wonderfully talented, and wholly charming," in "Sylvia Dared."

There were four machines in front of the bungalow and five men in Vere's little drawing-room, two leading men and Ben and Dennington, of Dennington Productions, and an artist who was going to paint Vere's portrait. Vere usually affected simplicity, but to-night she wore a decidedly startling gown. She gave Ross a smile, and he sat in a corner for two hours listening to a lot of not very important talk.

And as he listened he understood why his people wanted him to marry Marjorie, one of his own kind, and why Vere's friends expected her to marry one of her kind—a big man in her world—like Dennington. Yes, he belonged in one world, Vere in one quite different and of which his was definitely doubtful.

Vere showed a good deal of ravishing silken ankle. She let every man see just how wonderful she thought he was in his particular line. Also she said a good deal about herself. She had just finished a picture that day that was a world beater, and Danby was sending her the script for her next in the morning. It was one of Fairdon's and she hadn't been crazy about the other one he had written for her. Then suddenly she had nothing more to say and smiled across at Ross in his corner. The other men all looked at him interestedly, and then Ben said he guessed he'd better make for home or Peg would be "in his hair." So they all went, rather noisily.

Vere walked back into his arms and kissed him and drew him down on the divan beside her, and laid her head on his shoulder and murmured that she was *so* tired! Was he always going to take her like this when she was tired? Always and forever! Then she sat there for a long time in his arms, with her eyes closed.

At last he began to tell her that "they" insisted on his going to New York—to be gone quite some time.

She opened her eyes. "Are you going?"

He didn't see how he *could*, but if he didn't there'd be a row—

Vere sat up thoughtfully. "Well—I'm going to take a little vacation. And I need a lot of clothes, and of course, New York's the only place to get 'em."

"Vere! You mean you'll be *there*?"

"Don't you want to marry me?" she pouted.

It seemed that he did. "When, when, dear?"

"Well, not before to-morrow!" she laughed.

Marjorie's husband—wasn't it funny for Marjorie to marry Bill Tucker—will carry on the business of Shedd & Allison. Our Ross now "presents" Vere Desmond in whatever she appears. He is the Great Mogul of The Vere Desmond Picture Corporation. His father boasts disgustingly of "my son's success." Yes, sir, the stationery business was too slow for *him*! And he and mother wouldn't miss one of Vere's pictures for anything!

Mr. and Mrs. Ross Allison are still amusingly in love with each other, and interviewers always look up their address when they want to expatiate upon "The Ideal Home Life of Our Favorite Players."





Charms *and* Philters

By Virginia Middleton

Author of "Shall Girls Propose?" "Encouraging a Blaze," etc.

What, in your opinion, is the best powder, charm, or philter with which to attract—and then to keep—a man?

I N the kitchen the cook, vast, shapeless, with polished ebony skin, ivory tooth, and anthracite brilliancy of eye, discoursed upon the mystery of sex attraction. She did not call it that. The word "sex" was happily absent from her vocabulary. "Men-folks" and "women-folks" were her antique substitutes for the word that is in somewhat dingy repute since the psychoanalysts took to attributing to its influence all earthly unpleasantness from battle, murder, and sudden death to daughter's fit of bad temper because mother intervenes between her and the possession of a cobweb georgette waist for school wear.

"Yes, honey," said the cook in a rich singsong, "I *knows* et is de truf, I *knows* et. A woman kin have any man she want, she kin make any man like huh, lob huh, run afteh huh, ef she jes uses de right powder. Why, honey, ain' I de libbin' pussonification of et? Ain' I had free husbands—an' kin make dem four to-morreh ef Silas was to pass to glory—all of dem de men I picked out foh to have? Ain' I got dem by givin' dem de powder when dey don' dream dey's drinkin' a thing but lemonade? Ain' I had a man slash one

of dey-all to pieces on 'count of me, jes because I was absentlike, an' done give him some of de powder 'dout intendin' to? Yas, ma'am, yas, missy, dey ain' no question 'bout et—de powder does de work. My ole granny, she gave me de rule, an' she got et from her mammy, wot got et from an ole nigger woman dat use to hole talk wif de debbil down near whar he lib, on a bayou on de Mississippi, long way back when dere was slaves. Yas'm."

The cook's auditors gaze upon her with fascinated eyes, dimples at the corners of the lips rigorously repressed. After all, there she sits, huge and ungainly, unbeautiful by every Caucasian standard, and indubitably the wife, in due legal succession, of three husbands of her own choice! And many a beauty walks unwed! What wonder that she clings to her superstition!

"Nonsense, Linda," says the voice of the most daring of the kitchen iconoclasts. "The powder you use to win them—the men whom you marry and the men who knife the men you marry—is baking powder! Anybody who eats your biscuits, you know, is bound to want to get you for his own biscuit maker."

"No, ma'am! De biscuit powder is all right for keepin' dem afteh dey is got, but et's de powder dat I'm tellin' you-all 'bout dat gets dem. Yas, ma'am."

The kitchen visitors, preserving as straight faces as courtesy demands, go away by and by, and discourse upon the ineradicable vein of superstition in the negro blood. They talk about it in their dressing rooms, as they anoint their arms with the freckle eradicator, "made from the rule of a famous French beauty," or their eyelashes with the ointment "prepared according to a prescription used in the harem of the late sultan." And it is idle to pretend that they are bent upon removing sunburn or elongating lashes because of the pleasure which their own sex takes in the sight of white skin and delicately veiled eyes. Like Linda in the kitchen, concocting her powder, their labors are for the ensnaring of the male. It is for the delectation of wooers that they practice the arts of the beauty seeker; for the multiplication of suitors that they touchingly pin their faith to the potency of the contents of the bottles and jars.

From the powder made by the rule of the "ole nigger woman dat use to hole talk wif de debbil down neah whar he lib" to the salve from the prescription used in the harem of the late sultan, the perfume compounded by the recipe of the Viennese court lady or the famous French beauty, how long is the step? From Linda pinning her faith to the potion so thoughtfully bequeathed to her by her maternal ancestor, to Linda's derisive audience, smearing themselves with emollients and believing that they are thereby achieving charm, is the chasm, after all, so deep?

May there not, in spite of all our modern skepticism, be *something* in the potion superstition? At any rate, there can be no harm in trying the

cream warranted to give its devout user a complexion of snow and rose in a fortnight, or in the new perfume guaranteed to tantalize, to attract, to elude, to invite!

Thus Linda's audience of unbelievers toy with the dream that underlies Linda's powder—namely, that there is a magic at the root of human attractions and repulsions, and that one may stumble upon it if one tries all the well-advertised magics of the day. Perhaps the "ole nigger woman," and perhaps the alchemists who were so serviceable to the Mediceis and their friends, were bungling pioneers, imitating arts which science has perfected in the form of all the lotions and scents upon the market to-day! One can hope, and one can try them!

It is an attractive theory, bound to have many followers. For it appeals to the indolent instinct in us all. It appeals to the conviction that it is a lot easier to gain a desired end by a fortunately turned trick, by chicane, by wizardry, rather than by hard work.

It may be hard work to win a lover, or a friend. It is surely hard work, if one counts as hard work all the manifestations of unselfishness necessary to keep a lover or a friend. How much easier if the thing can be done by the Pompadour Blemish Eradicator, or by the Du Barry *Nuage du Héliotrope* or by the *Défi d'Age*!

But does it often really work—the theory that love may be coerced by magic, even the magic of a sedulously cultivated beauty? Listen to the tale of woe of a devout practitioner!

"Of course, I would never write this to a person who knew me," the tale runs. "I could never look any one in the face again, after admitting that I fell in love with a young man before he fell in love with me! But it is different, writing it to a stranger who will never see me. I did it—I mean the falling in love. And I made up my mind

to try to show some sense about it. Since I had fallen in love and since I wanted him to fall in love with me, and since I wanted to be married to him, why not show at least as much intelligence about it all as if it were a case of wanting to go to college or into business or anything like that? That's what I asked myself. Why not plan and work a little for what I wanted? So I did. I studied everything I could find on being attractive. You see, there's a good deal printed on the subject, if you happen to be looking for it as I was. And it almost all seemed to be to the effect that a girl was a fool if she didn't make the very most of her good looks when she wanted to attract any one. So I did it. My whole family got down on me. I used to stay so long in the bathroom—we've got only one, and there are seven of us—taking scented baths and toning-up facial exercises. Also my sisters said I was selfish and piggy, because I said that nothing would induce me to wash dishes any longer. I was taking care of my hands. The hands seemed to count for a lot in some of the things I read. I had never taken any care of mine, and so when I started out on my career they needed a lot of extra attention. I dropped most of my allowance at the manicure's, and I wore old kid gloves to bed, and all of that. They grew to be quite white and soft—I will say that for the treatment. I used sometimes to think how I should like to hold them if I were a man. But every one in the family was sore at me—even mother, when I wouldn't stem the currants for jelly. And what was the end of it? Why, he fell heels over head in love with a cousin who came to visit us, and whose 'paws' were sights, simply sights! They were brown and rough and scratched, with nails that could scarcely be described as clean. As for that shell-like stuff—well, I wish you could have seen them! And the rest

of her—flyaway hair, freckles, clothes of any old sort and put on in any old way! I don't mean to say that she wasn't a good sport. She was, and except while I was green with jealousy of her, I liked her. But what I want to point out is how useless all that 'cultivate-your-good-points' stuff was to me after I had tried it. As for scent—I simply impoverished myself buying the best sorts, and I simply killed myself trying to remember always to float around in a cloud of violet perfume—scarfs, hankies, stockings, undies just drenched in it. And the ingrate whom I was trying to charm said one time, in my hearing, that he hated a woman who reeked of perfume!

"Well, when I had reconciled myself to the situation, and had bought them a wedding present, I sort of fell in love again. I made up my mind not to make the same mistake twice. If men liked wholesome, natural girls with all their imperfections thick upon them, I was going to be that sort of a girl. So I tried my cousin's tack. I even gave up scented soap, and I let my younger sister have all my violet water, face powder, sachet, as well as my facial creams and my nail rouge. I even gave her my transformation—which she could use—our hair being just the same color. I hoed in the garden and I washed dishes and I played tennis with a sport blouse on that reddened me until my chest and throat looked as though they had been treated with old-fashioned mustard plasters. And, if you please, when I came to reckon my progress, I found that my younger sister was engaged to the man!

"Isn't there anything authoritative anywhere on the subject of how to get a young man when you have made up your mind that you want to marry, and that any good representative of a certain class of young man will do? Bertha—that's my young sister—kept herself smelling like a young apothecary

cary shop with essence of violet, and he simply floated around after her, as they do in books. But when I did it, how different! Is there anything in that attraction-by-perfume stuff? Or is there any truth in the directions for making yourself perfectly irresistible?"

"Directions for making oneself perfectly irresistible!" Linda's powder—the medieval *poudre d'amour*! The scent which lures; the color to which men flock as resistlessly as bees to roses; the lovely, swooning pallors for which they sigh—are they all figments of some more civilized Linda's imagination? Has the human race progressed so far from its animal stage that all the old animal traditions are no longer with it?

For the animal, assuredly, relies for guidance in all the affairs of its existence, gustatory, amatory and life-and-death, upon scents and upon sights. He scents his enemy, his friend, the vegetation that is good for him and the vegetation that means destruction. He scents his own lair; he detects the presence of his foe or of his mate, as the case may be, far sooner by sense of smell than by that of sight or sound. But sight, too, has vital meaning for him. This color is healing, that denotes the ranging enemy. To escape peril, he changes his own color to suit his surroundings, that no hostile eye may mark him and plot his undoing. The firefly glitters to attract her kind, and the bird dresses himself with "livelier iris" when he woos his mate.

And man is an animal. Yet strong men have been seen to sit, blanched and distraught, at dinner tables, waving away delicious dishes, only because the dazzling ladies beside them were too sweetly drenched with *odeurs de France*—*odeurs*, which, perhaps, other strong men might have rejoiced to breathe, and found thereby sharper appetite for the viands! And men with

perfectly good eyes in their heads have been known to find purple and gold, rose and silver, gaudy, repellent colors and to declare of mist gray or of faded tan: "That is the loveliest color in the world."

We're too remote from the animal to be tabulated as to our instincts with any serviceable degree of accuracy. The man that "loves a rosy cheek and a coral lip admires" bears no outward mark to distinguish him from his fellow who merely demands a receptive and tireless ear in woman.

So, as there is no taste in woman-kind that is common to all men, there is no blanket prescription for "making oneself perfectly irresistible." There is no "Linda's powder" warranted never to fail. Each man is a separate problem, requiring individual study for mastery. This is more difficult work than pouring a few "drops" into his cup of coffee, or rubbing wrinkles from one's own forehead with a perfect massage cream. The magic philter, easy, simple, procurable through application to the descendant of the grandam whose friend used to hold talk with the devil, or through purchase from the manufacturer to whom was confided the secret of the sultan's harem—that would be so much easier to use than intelligence, tact, unselfishness, sympathy, gayety, and all the admirable social qualities which seem necessary for the enchaining of man-progressed-beyond-the-animal.

Yet, perhaps it is just as well to begin to use all these means in the beginning. For even Linda, confident of the power of her own concoction from the bayous of the Mississippi to win any man upon whom she fixes her coal-black, coal-bright eye, confesses that it is by the use of baking powder alone that her captives are held! One might as well begin early in the game to practice the art which endures!

Belinda and the Red Terror

By Anne O'Hagan

Author of "Pemberley," "The Wife of Asa Pincheon," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWARD C. CASWELL

How it came about that Belinda, the radical, became Belinda, the calm and wise, who could declare, "There is no terror at all, if only people love each other."

BELINDA was accustomed to assert, in moments of self-revelation, that the only circumstance which tempered her radicalism was the radicals. For their causes—any of them, all of them!—she professed the most ardent sympathy, but their coiffures she held in detestation. She could have suffered imprisonment—have gone to the stake—in behalf of free speech, free press, free soup, free love, or any other variety of freedom, except for the society she would have had to encounter in the place of her incarceration or of her picturesque martyrdom.

However, she was wont to conclude, as she pensively summed up her intellectual convictions, the radical causes were still the gainers over the conservative, as far as her support went. For she could endure neither conservative doctrines nor personalities!

The green velvet tam-o'-shanter perched jauntily upon the thinning, gray, cropped locks of Miss Outhwaite, wife of Mr. James Smith, and head of the Women's Own-Your-Own-Name League, made her think regretfully of the roses and honeysuckles upon the porches of her home town, where every husband was a czar. On the other hand, the perfection of Mrs. Van Diemer Schermerhorn's permanent wave, the absolute correctness of her toques, the moneyed impeccability of her shoes, aroused even more violent hatreds in her. And, in addition, she loathed the views of which Mrs. Van

Diemer Schermerhorn was accredited spokesman, as president of the National Women's Association for the Preservation of Men's Rights.

Belinda's sartorial taste rendered unbearably offensive the thought of a green velvet tam upon a head over which more than seventeen summers had passed. Her salary, as editor of the Sunday Woman's Page of the *Chronicle*, made Mrs. Van Diemer Schermerhorn's accouterments as unattainable as the Kohinoor. These conditions did not increase her tolerance of the opinions of that pampered child of fortune, whose father had been one of the hundreds of golden-voiced orators of our elder Senate, and whose husband was known outside his banks only as her husband.

In spite of Belinda's sympathy for radical causes, her distaste for radical clothing and personal relations would probably have kept her a mere waverer along the line of demarcation between the two schools of thought and behavior, had it not been for certain of our gallant soldiers and sailors. It was they who threw Belinda to the Bolsheviks—using that term in the general loose fashion and without regard to its linguistic or historical content.

These youthful defenders of democracy, in New York on leave from various camps, and unoccupied with the large and serious work of putting down militarism abroad, had been lightly heartedly engaging in the task of putting it up at home. Whenever a meet-

ing was advertised for the discussion of topics upon which they felt themselves qualified to speak with authority, they attended the meeting, not to speak, but to indulge in the boyish pastime of breaking it up. Thus, duly informed by the papers and perhaps by other agents for the dissemination of controversial knowledge, that the "radicals" were to hold a conference one night for the purpose of considering the question of "American troops in Russia," or something equally debatable, they decided to attend the conference. And Belinda had also decided to attend it so that she might inject into her Woman's Page a little spice of timeliness—there were to be women speakers at the meeting, and she was desperately tired of serving her readers a weekly dish of Red Cross heroines and League-for-Women's-Service canonizations. She mentioned her intention as she made ready to leave the *Chronicle* office one night.

"Better not wear that hat, then, Miss Kilham," advised one of the reporters who was lounging near, waiting for an evening assignment.

"What's the matter with the hat?" asked Belinda belligerently.

It was, in point of fact, a very smart-looking turban, compounded out of her recollections of one of Mrs. Van Diemer Schermerhorn's, a quarter of a yard of red velvet, and the unrubbed portion of an old skunk neckpiece. It looked well on Belinda's shining, fine-spun, wavy black hair, and above her brilliant dark eyes, and the incarnadined cheeks and lips that were her last, lingering souvenirs of her home town, with its roses and honeysuckles, and the sunshine and air that are the concomitants of roses and honeysuckles.

"Hat's all right enough," admitted her advisor, "but the soldier boys aren't letting people wear red at these meetings. 'Down with the red flag' stuff,

you know—'stars and stripes forever'—"

"But my hat— Oh, don't be ridiculous!" sputtered Belinda.

"It's a fact. They took the red neckties off some of the men the other night— Don't you ever read the papers? You ought to. There's a lot of interesting stuff in them nowadays. There's a war on in Europe."

"Bosh!" said Belinda inelegantly. "And as for my hat, I shall, naturally, wear what I please. I shall hardly let some boys out of the reformatory dictate my costumes to me!" The fact that she had had an ancestor in every war from the Revolution down to the Spanish inflated her manner with considerable hauteur.

"Suit yourself, my dear girl! Only don't be surprised when it happens. I dare say the office will bail you out, if you're arrested for displaying symbols hostile to the spirit of our great democracy. Good luck to you!"

Belinda, unbelieving, amused, indignant, went forth, ate her dinner in a nearby restaurant, and gave a fleeting thought or two to the art of cookery as it used to be admirably practiced by the conservative housewives of her home town. Then she made her way to the place of the meeting, a hall on the lower east side. A light snow had begun to fall, and she covered the toque with a dark green veil which she opportunely found in the pocket of her long coat. She entered the hall without encountering opposition, and she listened to impassioned appeals for the recall of our troops from Russia; and for the sending of more and more troops to Russia; to denunciations of the censorship, and to denunciations of those who denounced the censorship; and to much excellent oratory on every side of all the many-faceted questions of the hour.

It was all borne along upon a wave—a river—of sound from outside the hall. The street was packed, one could easily



The officer signaled for silence.

tell, with a mob engaged in deriding the purpose, whatever it may have been, of the meeting. Songs arose, almost loud enough to drown out the speakers inside the hall—soldiers' songs about the distance to Tipperary and hatred of the reveille, and Ka-a-a-ty and the c-c-cowshed, and all the rest of them. Policemen and plain-clothes men moved importantly around at the back of the hall. The atmosphere was stimulatingly excited, and Belinda enjoyed herself very much, and was convinced that our troops ought to be withdrawn from Russia. By and by she became equally sure that she ought to go home to bed. There comes an hour, for the merely incipient radical, when further speech

seems superfluous and even a nuisance. Belinda was of course aware, from attendance at other meetings, that the hour arrived for her long before the faucets of radical eloquence were likely to be turned off. She decided to leave the hall and go home. It was in her endeavor to accomplish this perfectly legitimate ambition that her conversion to Bolshevism became complete—using the word, as hitherto, without the slightest regard to its meaning.

For, outside the door, a soldier, young, light-hearted, red-haired, endeavored to reason with her about wearing a red hat. She had discovered at the hall door that the green veil had apparently been dragged from her pocket during the process of sitting on her coat. She had not particularly cared—the veil was old, the snow had ceased, and she felt that she would like to see any one who would dare to challenge her taste in headgear on any ground!

She was now seeing him in the person of this soldier.

"You ridiculous boy!" said Belinda pleasantly, in reply to his initial request that she "can that hat." And then: "Aren't there any rules in the 'Manual of Arms' for developing gentlemanliness? There ought to be!"

"Take that hat off!" growled the red-haired boy, to whom the address of Belinda was, naturally, provocative. "Take off the red lid!"

"My lid," said Belinda, still pleasantly, though she was beginning to grow angry, "is, I think, less red than your own. Suppose I should tell you to dye your hair or to shave it off?"

The opponents of the red flag, all except the red-haired soldier, laughed appreciatively at this. But the red-haired boy, inflamed by the personality of the remark, grabbed at Belinda's arm and announced that he'd see whether or not she would continue to sport the color that was "an insult to every man who was risking his life to protect her and her likes"—and so on. Belinda called to one of the policemen keeping alleged order outside the hall.

"Arrest this young ruffian!" she demanded.

"Aw, why can't you take the hat off, lady?" asked the roundsman listlessly.

Belinda's fighting blood, inherited from all those ancestors from the Revolution down, fired. She spoke with considerable effectiveness. The inalienable right of every American woman to wear what she pleased upon her head—not excepting even Miss Outhwaite's green tam—was her theme. One might have gathered, had there been one to listen impartially, that the war in Europe would have to cease until Belinda Kilham had settled for all time the question of freedom in hats. But there was no one to listen impartially. On the contrary, she was jostled, shouted at, elbowed, abused, and almost drowned out. If there had been in

her any little drop of pusillanimity, she might even have been frightened, as she stood outside the entrance to the hall and addressed soldiers, sailors, policemen, stray rowdies, cabbies, and what not, meanwhile protecting the red velvet hat against threatened capture. But there was no such admixture in the rich, red fluid that ran through her veins and painted her lips and cheeks. She didn't even wish that the radicals inside would cease to berate the authorities of the world, and would come out to protect her and her hat.

Despite her courage and the fervent reasonableness of her discourse, she would have lost her hat but for the sudden appearance on the edge of the crowd of a young officer who forced his way through the heterogeneous mass of Belinda's derisive audience, and grabbed in a vicious, twisting grip the arm of the red-haired soldier, whose hand was clutching one side of the hat. The boy, with a cry of pain, let go his hold upon the hat, then turned to address the officer. When he saw him, he changed his mind, and used the disabled hand for the purpose of saluting.

"What does all this mean?" demanded the newcomer.

"It means—" began Belinda, and "It means—" began a score of the protectors of American institutions. But that was as far as the accounts agreed. The officer signaled for silence from all but Belinda.

"—that these men are a disgrace to the uniform they wear," she was stating. "That they are young ignoramuses who don't know—or care—what they are called upon to do in the world's fight for liberty. It means that they wish to impose the rule of their own abysmal ignorance upon their fellow citizens, and that they even so far forget the ordinary decency of American lads as to attack a woman on account of the hat she is wearing! It means"—she grew reckless—"that they are the

pitiful tools and dupes of sinister influences—and probably the whole army and all the armies are!”

The officer looked at the flushed, indignant face beneath the hat. He said, coldly, that he thought she overstated the case. Then he added that he would, with her permission, escort her to her car. He said a few words to the red-haired soldier, who, it appeared, was a member of his own company, enjoying forty-two hours' leave from Camp Mills.

When they had reached the car line which Belinda had intended to patronize, they were so deep in mutual recriminations and explanations that they walked beyond it. By that time Belinda had become a full-fledged radical, forgetful of everything but her hatred of the oppressions maintained by the established world order. And Captain Richard Darnton, who had, in his time, considered himself something of a progressive, found himself driven into defending every hoary antiquity of crime and outrage which was able to pass muster as part of the established system of things.

They finally took an elevated train, and, arguing mightily, they rode to the street on which was situated the row of gray stone palaces known as the Dorchester Apartments. Captain Darnton said, as they stood inside the imitation bronze and marble entrance hall:

“But we can't leave it like this! I must see you again— See here, couldn't you come to tea with me tomorrow? I'm up for seven days—I've got to make you see—”

“I've got to make you see—” interrupted Belinda. “Yes, I'll take tea with you. Of course, I don't know who you are or anything like that—”

“But, good heavens, girl!” cried Captain Darnton. “You've been telling me for the last three-quarters of an hour that you believed in upsetting all conventions and even all laws—”

“How like a conservative—to twist one's perfectly tame little statements into advocacy of murder and arson! But I *do* believe in the overturning of the conventions enough to regard what you were kind enough to do for me tonight, as a substitute for an introduction. And I will come to tea—in the red hat,” she ended defiantly.

“If you want to learn anything about me between now and then, call up the rectory of St. Martin's, in Highport. They'll tell you that I used to be clergyman in charge of the little mission church in Lowpoint, until I went to Plattsburg and got a commission, and leave of absence for the term of the war—”

“A clergyman! Worse and worse!” cried Belinda. “Certainly there can be no excuse for a clergyman's engaging in professional murder—”

“Don't you dare to call it that!” cried Richard Darnton.

The young woman, in sloppy khaki, who had replaced the Ethiopian once in charge of the elevator service, looked with languid curiosity at the pair, and then resumed her novel. It is generally easier to read a romance than to construct one from the materials at hand!

Tea was successful from the point of view of nature or fate, although it could scarcely have been called successful from that of either Captain Richard Darnton, Miss Belinda Kilham or the two camps of social opinion which they found themselves representing. That is, to the man, the girl's dark eyes, brilliant with earnestness, with scorn for pettiness, with hatred of tyranny, were beautiful, alluring eyes. And to the girl, he, bronzed, upright, stern, the champion of idealism, the upholder of narrow, rigid duty, was a nobly quixotic figure, compelling to her heart, although she declared that he left her mind untouched. They parted with an engagement for dinner the next night. It was to be a dinner in Be-

linda's little apartment, which Richard Darnton told her firmly that she ought not to occupy unchaperoned. Belinda looked at him indignantly.

"That would be an insult, if you were a little more enlightened," she told him. "You imply that I am either an ignorant fool or a—a wanton——"

"I imply nothing of the sort! I imply only that the world is censorious about a beautiful young girl——"

"Your world, maybe! Your mean, iron-bound, little world of codes and privileges! But the world in which I live—the world of work and good comradeship, of knowledge and fearlessness, of freedom and——"

"Oh, your precious freedom! The way you people use the word makes me almost regret the Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence! Can't you understand that freedom doesn't mean the liberty to run amuck, but the freedom——"

"Who ever intimated that I wanted to run amuck?" Brown eyes flashed into blue. The blue were like polished steel. But, as they looked at Belinda, they softened.

"You're too outrageously pretty to be a radical," he told her irrelevantly. Her lip curled a little.

"Thank you so much. You yourself are quite good looking enough to have rendered brains unnecessary—if that were the standard for men as well as for women!"

Yet they could not part without insuring the next meeting, and that was the one in Belinda's little flat, with the radical weeklies spread conspicuously on the sitting-room table, and the Sheffield candlesticks from her home town holding the pale-yellow candles that lighted the little feast. There was a Sheffield bowl full of golden oranges and pale-green and deep-purple grapes in the center of the table. There were fine-spun doilies and runners, and in a cabinet in the corner there was a tea

set of mulberry Staffordshire, breathing recollections of an ancestress of the War of 1812, or thereabouts. But over the mantel, above the ugly gas log, there was a reproduction of a nude by Heller; and pinned over the couch was a futurist bit which only its creator and Belinda could have pretended to understand. Richard Darnton turned his eyes away from the pictured woman, all seductive curves and exquisite flesh. He frowned and shrugged his shoulders at the futurist piece.

"You prefer a madonna or the 'Huguenot Lovers'?" inquired his hostess, with bland scorn. He started to answer her hotly and then changed his mind and laughed.

"I am not going to quarrel with you to-night," he told her. "Only to enjoy you—you wonderful girl, you! You make-believe modernist!" He caught her hands, and she did not withdraw them. They stood for a second, breathless, expectant, gazing into each other's eyes. Then he dropped her fingers.

"I told you you ought to have a chaperon," he said unsteadily.

"You haven't proved it," the girl answered.

"Do you want me to prove it?" He came close to her again, and his eyes burned upon her.

"Don't be ridiculous," said Belinda crisply.

The door from the pantry swung open, and her maid, an elderly mulatto of great dignity, entered with the grapefruit with which Belinda had elected to begin the dinner. But the spark had been struck. As they ate and made idle dinner-table conversation, the sense of flame played between them. Her color grew darker, richer, warmer. His eyes claimed and possessed her. Their fingers trembled as, rising from the table, he held a light for her cigarette. And when they passed from the dining room into the little box of a sitting room, he held her for a second



"Didn't you mean it?" he asked thickly.

under the arch that divided the rooms, and kissed her.

Belinda wrenched herself free.

"So that's your conservatism! That's your chivalry! That's your code!" she

cried. He pointed with his hand to the center of the arch. A little bunch of mistletoe glistened there.

"Didn't you mean it?" he asked thickly.

"No. I—— Oh, you absurd—— Of course I didn't! I didn't know it was there. Truly, I didn't. My maid, Malvina—— Why, if I wanted you to kiss me, do you think I would have to put up excuses like that?"

"And didn't you want me to kiss you?"

"I don't think I did," she said slowly. "Not you."

"Not me—you didn't want me—but some one else? You wouldn't object to another man's——" He was incoherent, indignant.

"You see, your pretensions—your profession—and your professions—they were different. I wanted you to be different from other men."

"I want to be different from other men—for you——" He pulled himself up sharply. "I'm afraid," he added, "that I've fallen in love with you."

"Afraid of it?" asked Belinda. "You needn't be. As long as I haven't fallen in love with you, no danger threatens you!"

"The danger of being unhappy without you threatens me."

"You aren't the sort of person," Belinda explained, "who falls in love overnight. Love with you would be a growth, a gradual affair—let us say an oak, and not a mushroom growth. So you needn't worry."

"But I want to be in love with you. I want you to be in love with me. I want—I want everything from you!"

"Are you bent on proving to me that I need a chaperon?" She spoke hardily.

"No. I—— Marry me, dearest girl! Marry me. Make me happy. Give me something to live for and on, over there—— I—I want you so. I need you. Oh, I love you!"

He was on his knees beside her chair. His arms had encircled her body. His face was pale, his eyes dark with the sudden storm that had seized him. Belinda felt the beating of his heart.

Her own beat heavily in response. But she shook herself free.

"I'm not going to be foolish about this," she said, her voice trembling somewhat. "I'm going to be very sensible. I'm going to tell you that this isn't love—it's a gust of passion, a little squall, that has caught you—caught us. I'm honest, you see. I admit that I feel—that I feel—this—too. But I'm going to remind you that you're a clergyman, and that I—despise—your profession. I think the creeds are cant and that their professors are, at the best, sentimentalists, dope-takers, dope-givers! I want to remind you that I am a radical—really, an out-and-outer, since the other night. I'd make a sweet thing in clergymen's wives, wouldn't I? Can't you see me preaching the social revolution to the ladies of the parish, while we cut out the garments for the poor, in the sewing circle? Can't you hear me scoffing at the sacramental idea of marriage, while you were pocketing the wedding fees? No, my dear boy, I won't marry you. And you'll admit that you don't really want me to. You want me—yes! And there's nothing disgraceful in that admission." She faced him squarely as he rose and stood looking down at her. "It's natural. It isn't vicious. But I'd be the last person in the world for you to marry, and you'd be the last person for me to marry. And since your convention, and my common sense, forbid us to—yield to nature—except on terms of wedlock—why, hadn't you better go?"

She stood up. She felt a little weak. She was glad that she had angered him—she saw that she had—by her contempt for his calling. Angry, he was less formidable to her than when he was on his knees, entreating her to surrender to the great wind that seemed to have blown out of space, and to have caught them up in its sweep. Angry, he would leave her. Angry, he would accept her statement of their ut-

ter incompatibility, and would go away before she had thrown herself into his arms! Gripping the back of her chair, she told herself that her resolution would not hold out long. She would marry him if he asked her again—marry him for the week or the day or the hour that they might snatch from life before he sailed; marry him for the eternal present, and forget all the vague, impossible, clashing future—

"This is the red terror," she suddenly remarked, with a wry smile. "And won't you please go—while I have the honesty to tell you how unsuited I am—we are—to each other? How I am as full of contempt for the real you and the real you's opinions and habits, as you are for the real me's? Please go."

She had hurt him in his most sensitive tenderness and pride—his zeal for his profession. He bade her good-by, and went stiffly away. And Belinda, the red terror of her blood rioting, fought all night with the impulse to call him back, and overcame it chiefly because she feared that he would not come!

Two days later it was Christmas, and she journeyed out to Highpoint. He had told her that his little mission congregation, which he had been building up in the mill-town suburb of Lowpoint, had been amalgamated with that of St. Martin's at Highpoint for the term of his service in the army. And he had furthermore told her that, being on leave over Christmas, he was to hold the morning service at St. Martin's. She hadn't been to a Christmas service since she had emancipated herself from all the serfdoms of her home town. But with a sense of homecoming she slid into a back pew in St. Martin's and allowed the once familiar atmosphere to act soothingly upon her troubled nerves. She told herself that the pleasure she took in the stained glass of the windows, the yellow marble

of the reredoes, the massed green of the Christmas decorations, was wholly sensual. She said the same thing about the satisfaction that possessed her when the organ played, and when the celebrant of the service—it was he, the soldier-priest, and her heart had raced at first sight of him, bronzed and carved and compelling in the khaki that he wore even in the chancel—spoke the sonorous words of the ritual. He preached the Christmas sermon, too, and she knew, as she heard him, that he was preaching to her unguessed presence and to himself. His theme was the essential modernity of the church, its essentially revolutionary quality. It was the overthrower of class distinctions, the cleanser of morals, the antidote for selfishness. He was saying again, but more beautifully, some of the things he had said to her in the wonderful, crammed, throbbing two or three days of their acquaintance. She smiled wryly. She was as little convinced by the words from the pulpit as she had been when he spoke them by her side.

But, despite the unrelaxed conviction of their utter unfitness for each other, the surge of her blood would not subside. She was in love for the first time in her twenty-four years. She had had little waverings of attraction, little impulses of flirtation before—matters of a white moon, or a waltz tune, or the scent of a patch of heliotrope. They had never survived the day's occupations. They had never competed in interest with life, with opinion, with work, with companionships. But this feeling with which he had inspired her—it was surviving everything, undermining everything! Her mind, clear and analytical, gauged it as passion, and not as love. There simply *could not* be love with such irreconcilable differences of opinion as theirs. But her mind was powerless to quench it. By and by she wrote to him at Camp Mills.



Richard tapped his way forward with the aid of a stick.

"After all," she said, "I wasn't honest. I wasn't true to my own theories of freedom. I was trying to be true, you see, to the old conventions and superstitions—to the doctrine that a man and a woman shall not love each other until they have made a social contract, a legal bargain, about it. Well, I am more honest now. I think of you every hour. I wish you were here. Come if you can—and if you want to——"

The days passed, and she had no reply. She held her head higher, and her eyes burned with smoldering fires. She worked with intenser energy, and her radicalism became more and more pronounced. And then, one day, she

had a letter—opened by the censor—from France. Her letter had reached him there. When he came home, he would make short work of all her revolutionary theories! He loved her—he loved her——

But no other letter followed that one, and all her study of the casualty lists was vain.

II.

She had asked at the house across the street for the key of the shabby, little wooden church at Lowpoint. The woman, blowzy, slatternly, with a brood of dirty children clinging to her skirts, and a table piled with unwashed dishes forming her background, told her that she did not need the key—some tramps had broken in one snowy night, and the door had never been mended. Belinda paused and attempted to make conversation. Did the people not miss the church services? Had they heard anything of their clergyman? The woman shrugged indifferent shoulders and stooped to

slap a troublesome child before replying that she had plenty to do without going to church, even when there was church to go to! It was, Belinda told herself, the epitome of the church's relation to society.

She crossed the road, and went in through the disabled door to the long, bare, barn-like room. It was dusky in the light of the late winter afternoon. "The Lord Is in His Holy Temple," painted in red letters against the back wall, seemed a mockery. There was the odor of mildew about the place;

there were dust, cobwebs, dirt. And he, the hopeful idealist, had expected to make it his weapon for bringing beauty and gladness into the dull world! Her heart swelled with pity for all the disillusionment he would certainly have come to know—if he had kept on.

She was there because she could not keep away. It had been just a year since he had charged the radical baiters at the meeting, and had borne her and her red hat in safety from the scene. She had wanted to keep the day as an anniversary. Probably he had come to his senses in the year, but she had not. She had longed for him; she had been willing to give up everything for the sheer joy of looking into his brilliant, blue eyes. In the depths of her mind she knew, or she believed that she knew, that her love could not continue, but meanwhile, there it was. She wanted him, and she would sacrifice anything to have him close to her again, for as long a time or as short a time as the imperious need lasted. Here, in this place, where his medieval spirit—so she named it, tenderly derisive—had known its great hours of hope and purpose, she would be a little nearer him.

Unconsciously, she knelt and hid her eyes on the rail of the pew before her. By and by she raised them. She had not prayed while she had bent in the attitude of prayer, unless the great loneliness and longing of her heart were a kind of prayer. As she raised her eyes, the door opened. She turned. Two men entered the room.

"Thank you, Joyce," said Richard Darnton's voice. "You needn't come back for me. There isn't any street to cross, or any road, on the way to Mrs. Marvin's. I can make my way quite well——"

"It's no trouble at all, Cap—Dominie," said a hearty voice.

"No, don't come back." Darnton's voice was almost querulous.

"Just as you say, then——"

She had crouched low in the pew. The man whom he had called Joyce stamped out. She waited. Richard tapped his way forward with the aid of a stick. She put her hand over her lips to keep back a cry. His eyes were hidden behind dark-colored glasses.

He felt his way forward, groped, and found the door of a front pew. He slid into it, sitting down heavily. Outside, the dusk deepened.

By and by she gathered up her courage. At least he was alive! It might be that he had reconsidered, it might be that he had changed, but at least he was alive! Her heart sang a hosanna. The worst of all the anxieties of the long months was past. Anything else she could bear. She stirred, rose. His head, which had been drooped upon his breast, came up.

"Who's that?" he called.

"It's Belinda Kilham," she replied as steadily as she could. He rose and stood staring in the direction of her voice. She went up the aisle toward him.

"Richard! I—— Why didn't you write to me?" she cried, reaching toward him. But he retreated.

"I—I had nothing to say, nothing I wanted to say," he answered. "I—you see—I have been injured. I was gassed. It blinded me. I have never got back my sight. I shall never wholly recover it. I—what could I write to you?"

"You could have written to me that you loved me," said Belinda.

"No," he said. "No. When we were two healthy animals, it was different. Then I could accept your creed. Then I could say that we would have each other for the splendid moment, and let the future take care of itself. But not——afterward."

"Splendid moment, nothing!" cried Belinda. "I mean to have all the long, quiet, drab years—if only you haven't

changed, Richard! If only you still—think you love me." A sharp fear rang suddenly in her voice.

"Yes, I've changed. I—I can't see how you look. I don't even care any longer how you look—how the little black curl grows back of your neck, how the red pulses in your cheeks. I only care that you despised my faiths—both of them, my faith in the church and my faith in the fight we were making. And that you wouldn't give up your freedom for anything I believed in. And that you were right—right, Belinda! It's all a dirty mess, the world, and nothing can help—"

"Is that what you've been learning over there, you poor, sick soul?" she cried. Her voice was ringing, full of tenderness and scorn and belief. "Well, over here I have been learning all the other things—the things you used to know! Oh, Richard, don't you see? We were meant for each other, we belong to each other. We have already entered into each other, and begun to remake each other. That is love. That is love! And not the mere possessing, or the mere enjoying of each other's companionship. That's the real thing—entering into each other and remolding each other, year by year!"

"I won't have your pity," he was saying. She could see the quivering of the lips that had been so firm and so assured once upon a time.

"You can't help having everything I choose to give you, everything I am obliged to give you!" she retorted. She faced him as she had faced the rowdies of a year before. "Pity and love and passion—all, all, Richard. You've got to take them—"

"I won't marry you!" He declared it in a great burst. "It will be years

before I can see decently again—if ever. I have no career to invite you to. All my old beliefs are dead, killed, I tell you—my eyes are useless—"

"All your old beliefs are alive and in me," she answered him, defiant and steady. "And I shall be your eyes until you have your own again. And, finally, Richard Darnton, I shall barricade the door and never let you out of this place until you have promised to marry me. You don't mean to drive me to such compromising extremes, do you?"

He smiled uncertainly. He put out his arm and she nestled in its shelter, her tear-bright eyes upon his darkened ones. Something of the dull, weary look of his despair had gone from him.

"Well," he said waveringly, "you said you thought marriage proposals ought to come from the woman, didn't you? Belinda, the radical, who believes in the red terror—but who hasn't known the black terror, thank God—" He strained to look at her through the dark glasses.

"There is no terror at all," said Belinda, calm and wise, "if only people love each other. It sounds like the copy book," she added hastily, "or like something out of one of your sermons, Richard. But the funny thing is that it is true!"

In the shelter of his arm, she turned her head and saw the ancient words red-painted on the wall. The letters were magnified through tears that hung upon her lashes.

"The Lord Is in His Holy Temple." That that should be true, though the earth was a sham, with old tyrannies and with the struggle against them! A sob filled her throat. She fought it, and twisted her lips into her gallant smile.

"I shall be married," she said, "in my red hat."



It was gallant in him to respond like that. For he was in agony.



A Kick in the Ribs

A dog story

By Anice Terhune

Author of "More Super-Women," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

BETTY ELLISON and two callers were having tea in a corner of the vine-covered veranda, where the honeysuckle and climbing roses grew thickest. It was the hottest of hot June afternoons; but the tea was the iciest of iced tea, in frosty glasses, enhanced by sprigs of fresh mint. Also, there were crisp, dry, little cakes at hand.

Betty always did this sort of thing to perfection. Indeed, she did most things to perfection. She was looking especially lovely, too, this afternoon, in her cool, white frock, as befitted such a delightfully pretty girl, on such a sizzlingly hot day.

"Easy to look at," her neighbor, Jack Lambert, commented mentally. His fellow caller, Wallace Rood, had much the same thought. The two men, clad in white trousers, silk shirts, and snowy

shoes, were as immaculate in appearance as their hostess.

Then, all at once, bedlam broke loose. Into the midst of this green coolness and white immaculateness, bounded happily a huge, furry, pink-tongued, white-toothed mass of rich black mud—that had once been a gray collie dog.

Betty, a lemon dish in one hand, a very full iced-tea glass in the other, dodged spasmodically, and shrieked:

"Go 'way, Dawn! Down!"

But she was an instant too late! Before she could free her hands, the muddy creature, in a frenzy of delight, had hurled himself at his mistress, playfully patting her white dress with his dirty, wet paws, and covering her with grimy moisture.

"Look out!" she gasped. "He's been in the lake, and then rolled on the muddy bank! Down, Dawn!"

But Gray Dawn, evidently, had had wonderful adventures in the lake, and was determined to tell every one about them.

Before Betty could get a firm grip on the slippery dog, he had rushed, in excited greeting, to each man in turn, rubbing his right side on one pair of trousers, his left side on the other pair, curving gleefully about among his three victims—now almost as mud-streaked as himself.

"You should have been named 'That Brown Taste the Morning After'—instead of 'Gray Dawn,'" chuckled Jack Lambert, leaping sideways, in a vain attempt to elude the collie's agile paws.

It is amazing how much havoc a really enterprising dog can create. If he has the courage of his convictions, and doesn't let himself be deterred from his original purpose, he can make white black in an incredibly short time.

Lambert, who was an ardent adorer of Betty's, and therefore a friend of Dawn's—and a tremendously nice chap in the bargain—took the sudden, muddy deluge with perfect good humor.

Not so the other guest. It was Wallace Rood's first call on Miss Ellison. Jack had brought him along to show him "the only girl in the world;" and Wallace had been more than willing to be shown—and to show. Hence, his newest pair of white trousers, and the rest of his glorious paraphernalia.

Miss Ellison was all that Jack had said, and more, Wallace had decided almost at once. And just as he felt that the girl was bringing out his best conversational powers, and that he was rising to hitherto unknown heights of brilliance, this rotten, measly dog must jump into the middle of things, and made him look absolutely ridiculous in Miss Ellison's eyes!

He lacked Jack's sense of humor. Also, he was not yet in love with Betty; so instead of pushing Dawn off with

a friendly grin, as Jack had done, Rood gave him a kick—a vicious kick—in the softest part of his ribs.

In all the eighteen joyous months of his life Dawn had never before been kicked. He stood stark still for a moment, gazing at Rood with astonished, sorrowful, contemplative eyes. Also, he raised his upper lip ever so little over an eyetooth. Then, indignation overcame amazement. Without a sound, the collie sprang for the man's face.

Lambert intervened, leaping forward and catching the furious mass of wet fur in mid-air. Still holding the writhing collie, he lowered him to the ground.

Both he and Betty were fighting hard to remember that Rood was a guest, even though Dawn, momentarily, had forgotten it. Betty seized her angry pet by the collar, and ran with him down the steps, toward the kennels. As she went, she whispered comforting, apologetic things into one of his furry, gray ears.

"I'm dreadfully sorry, Mr. Rood," she called, as she hurried back, minus the collie. "Please accept Dawn's humble apologies. *He's* awfully sorry, too! He said so, on the way out to his kennel! Jack will tell you that he's really a beautifully behaved dog—isn't he, Jack?"

"Never have I seen a more perfectly brought-up child," declared Lambert dramatically. "And he's a good mixer—anybody can see that!"

"That'll do, Jack!" said Betty severely. "We're all in the same boat. Shall we stay dirty, and finish our tea while we dry off, or would you rather go upstairs into dad's dressing room, and try sponging?"

"What's a little bit of mud to souls as pure as ours!" cried Jack. "By all means let us stay where the food is! Cheer up, Wallace, what's your grouch?"

Wallace furtively dabbed at a mud spot on his knee.

"I'll have to be going in a minute," he said stiffly, "but before I go, can't we arrange for a ride together, Miss Ellison? Jack says you like to ride. What do you say to to-morrow morning?"

"I'd love it," answered Betty. Then, turning toward Lambert, "Are you going with us, Jack?"

"Can't, worse luck!" returned Jack, scowling fiercely at fate. "I've promised dad I'd motor him over to Morristown at seven thirty a. m. 'Up with the lark,' and all that stuff! Dad's on a still hunt for data for one of his law cases, and I'm a mere worm! While you're gamboling merrily along on horseback, through the upland woods, just think of me with my heart buried in South Jersey mud, but still breaking speed laws, as it beats faithfully for you—I—"

Jack's nonsense was cut short by the toot of a motor horn. A big car came lumbering down the drive. At the same moment, three seven-months-old collie pups rushed around the corner of the house, and made a bee line for the oncoming car. Directly into its path they ran, barking wildly, and disregarding the shrieks of the anxious motorists.

Then, like a gray streak, Dawn dashed out from nowhere, and whirled up the drive. With his mighty shoulders, he knocked first one puppy out of the way, then another, until all three were quickly pushed out of danger and on to the grass. The sheep-herding instinct of centuries had flashed out a moment in Dawn.

As the car rolled by and came to a halt under the porte-cochère, the collie gave a quiet glance over the puppies' heads at Betty—a glance which said as plainly as words:

"I was naughty a little while ago, dear mistress; but now I've saved the puppies for you, so please love me again!"

Then he opened his mouth and grinned, as he stood, still looking only at his mistress.

Betty patted the dog and said:

"Good little Gray Dawn! You're all forgiven now!"

The bunch of young people, descending from the car, covered the muddy dog with praise, and fed him candy until he wagged himself into cruller-shapes, over and over again, in his happiness at being once more appreciated.

"That's the most wonderful thing I ever saw!" exclaimed one of Betty's very enthusiastic friends.

"Imagine a dog knowing enough to drive those puppies out of danger!" said another. "How did you ever teach him to do it, Betty?"

"I never taught him at all!" answered the girl, laughing. "That's the funny part of it! He always rushes them out of harm's way like that; and then he looks straight into my eyes afterward as much as to say: 'Did you see what I did?'"

"He's full of wonderful tricks," said Jack, with pride, to the world at large.

In all the jolly crowd the one person whom Dawn avoided was Wallace Rood. Dawn had had time to meditate on the guest law, taught rigidly from puppyhood to every dog on the place. No longer did he seek to attack Rood. But he gave him a wide berth. And there was no friendliness in his soft, brown eyes when they chanced to rest on the man who had kicked him.

And Wallace, too, was the one person who had no word of praise for Dawn. He looked decidedly bored at the laudatory chatter, and said at last:

"Now be honest, Miss Ellison. You know no dog would have sense enough to do a thing like that unless he was taught! *That* takes reasoning power!"

Betty's eyes flashed.

"If you understood collies, Mr. Rood, you'd know it was possible! He



"Look out!" gasped Betty. "He's been in the lake, and then rolled on the muddy bank! Down, Dawn!"

not only herds the puppies, but if they start barking when I take my car out of the garage, he runs right among them, and scolds them in a funny high bark—just like a fussy mother—and he stops their noise, every time, too! Dawn is *very* clever—and he often reasons things out—just as he has reasoned out that you don't understand him, and don't like him—so he keeps away from you!"

"But——"

"If you say any more about Dawn, I won't go riding with you to-morrow

morning!" Miss Ellison announced smilingly. But there was a tinge of finality in her remark that made Rood change the subject at once.

"Will it be too early if I say ten o'clock, for our ride?" he asked meekly.

"No, that will suit me perfectly," agreed Betty.

"Don't forget about my heart and the Jersey mud," said Jack, with mock sadness. "And, speaking of mud, let's tell these people that we were born white, even like unto ourselves! And then, as a dream, 'nosey Dawn rose out

of the lake,' touched us lightly here and there, and— You tell 'em the rest, I'm going home to wash up!"

The two men went away, while Betty explained that there had not been a mud-slinging contest, though things looked a bit that way. This brought the subject quite naturally around to Gray Dawn again.

The next morning was perfect for riding. Betty and her companion ambled on through leafy lanes and by-paths, rather than taking the open road, for Betty's horse, Jill, was high-spirited and hated the smell of gasoline. Also, she resented being passed by motor cars, and usually she tried to beat them at their own game.

Betty was a splendid horsewoman, and had Jill in perfect control at all times; but she humored her horse in her dislike for the motor highway. So, when the choice lay with her, as it did this morning, she always chose paths, rather than roads.

Wallace Rood was riding Jack's horse. The man was good enough to look upon, arrayed in the very latest "agony" of riding togs. He sat well, and handled his horse fairly; but Betty felt, instinctively, that he did not understand horses much better than he understood dogs.

The ride lasted for two hours or more, and was quite without event until they struck a narrow bridle path, about two miles and a half from the Ellison home. It was Betty's favorite path, and led right through a patch of birches into an upland field, where the view was charming. The girl's horse was leading, and as Jill picked her way daintily through the thick tangle of wild-rose-starred underbrush, Betty looked back over her shoulder, and made laughing answer to a remark of Rood's.

As luck would have it, a bumblebee chose that very moment to fly out of a wild rose and blunder into Jill's ear.

Then he tried to sting his way out. Jill went straight up into the air. Betty, off guard, was almost unseated by Jill's wild spring. She tried to quiet the horse, and to bring her in. It was no use. Poor Jill had gone quite crazy with pain, and she completely lost the consciousness that any one was on her back. She reared again; then dropped her nose nearly to the ground, and proceeded to run as if the devil himself were after her. She probably thought he was, if she had any thought at all, beyond the pain in her ear.

With all the skill she possessed, Betty kept her seat. She managed to stick on, although Jill stopped again and again to rear, and buck, and then to plunge once more.

Wallace Rood, to do him justice, tried his best to catch up with the flying pair. But he was no great horseman, and he had all he could do to keep his own excited mount under control. Betty was so far ahead that he could only shout, now and then, foolish words of advice, to which neither Betty nor Jill paid the slightest attention.

Just as they broke out of the wood into the open field, Dawn emerged from a patch of forest, on the opposite side. He had had a delightful morning, chasing rabbits. He had never been known to catch one; but he evidently lived in hope of doing so at some time, for hunting was one of his favorite sports. The collie was leisurely on his way home, his nose brown with fresh earth, his mouth open in his usual friendly grin, his heart at peace with the whole world.

Then, far at the other end of the clearing, he caught scent and sound of Jill and his beloved mistress. Presently they tore into view. Surely, they were acting strangely! Instinct told him something was very, very wrong indeed! Being only a dog, and not as prudent as Wallace Rood, he never thought of himself, but only of Betty.

He flattened back his ears and rushed into the very heart of danger. Across the field he raced, and reached horse and rider just as Jill, gone entirely mad, rose up on her hind legs and attempted to throw herself over backward.

At sight of the oncoming dog, Rood, far in the rear, gave a yell of horror and lashed his horse forward, meanwhile calling frantically to Dawn. But Dawn had no time to bother with Rood. He must save his mistress. That was all his dog mind knew, or cared about, just then.

True to his collie instinct in battle, he made a leap at the horse's throat—and missed it by an eighth of an inch. His open mouth snapped shut around the flapping bridle, just under the horse's chin. And the dog hung and swung, as Jill, tossing her head, and lashing about with her forefeet, strove to free herself. The force of Dawn's weight brought the mare down to all fours, bucking and plunging. Still the collie hung on, a huge fluffy, eighty-pound gray ball.

Then, Rood, still yelling at Dawn, galloped up alongside, and with his riding crop dealt the brave dog a fearful slash.

"Let go, you fool!" he shouted, as he rained blow upon blow on the collie's swinging body. "Let go! You're driving the horse crazy!"

Dawn never loosed his grip. He merely curled his legs up tighter, while trickles of blood showed through his soft fur.

"Stop!" panted Betty, at the first blow, with what little breath she had left. "Jump down and catch Jill! Can't you see that Dawn's holding her for you?"

Still Dawn clung—and swung; and because even a horse cannot keep on plunging about with an eighty-pound weight hanging to its chin, Jill finally came to a shivering standstill, just as Rood, at Betty's order, dismounted and

caught her bit. In a trice, Betty had slipped down and had run up to Dawn.

"Are you hurt?" she cried.

At sound of her voice, Dawn turned his eyes—he could not turn his head. Then, seeing his mistress quite safe on the ground, he suddenly let go of the bridle and fell in a heap at her feet, feebly trying to wag his tail, and to offer a paw. Betty gathered him in her arms and hugged him, while tears filled her eyes.

"Brave, brave little Dawn!" she whispered, over and over.

To Rood she said not a word, as he stood holding both horses—now quiet, but trembling with exhaustion. She began to examine Dawn. He was bleeding in several places from the whip cuts. And one white paw hung limp—broken by a lunge of Jill's sharp hoof.

"You'll have to take the horses home," said Betty to Rood, in a cold, tired, little voice. "I shall stay here with Dawn. Take the road instead of the path. It's shorter. And please ask dad to send the car for Dawn and me. And—and—please don't come back with them! I don't believe Dawn wants to see you just yet!"

Without delay Rood followed Miss Ellison's instructions. He felt that, somehow, he did not shine in comparison with Dawn.

As soon as the man's back was turned Betty buried her head in Dawn's fur and closed her eyes. She felt very much inclined to faint. But she scorned girls who faint; so she just kept her eyes closed, and waited. She cuddled Dawn's broken paw in her hands, and whispered foolish, tender, little things which the collie, by his slowly wagging tail, showed that he understood. It was gallant in him to respond like that. For he was in agony. By nature, a newly broken paw and a wagging tail do not synchronize.

Then, a few moments later, Betty



His open mouth snapped shut around the flapping bridle, just under the horse's chin.

heard hurrying footsteps, and she opened her eyes. There, leaping across the high grass, was Jack Lambert—her good, reliable, dependable Jack. And she felt like weeping, for sheer relief.

"The rescue party's just down the road!" he shouted cheerily. "I got back from Morristown sooner than I thought I could. I met Wallace with the nags and he told me about it; so I swung the old car right around. It's at the edge of the field—I couldn't get it up the bank. Hello, Dawnie, old boy! Gee! What a sight! The poor little pup! *Some grand dog!* Thank God you weren't hurt, Betty!"

As tenderly as a woman, Jack lifted the hurt dog and carried him in his arms to the waiting car. Betty walked alongside, and gave a detailed account of the hero-collie's exploit.

That night the veterinary set the dog's leg, and promised that, because the break was not on the joint, it would be as good as new in about six weeks. Dawn lay on the front steps, his head in Betty's lap, surrounded by a little knot of human admirers.

Into the group walked Jack Lambert and Wallace Rood. The latter was very quiet. Presently he moved nearer Betty. Dawn raised his head from his

mistress' lap. There was a glint of cold fire in the glance he turned on the newcomer. Deep down in his furry throat a rumbling growl was born.

"Quiet, Dawn! *Quiet!*" warned Betty.

But Rood had heard the growled challenge. For a moment he hesitated. Then he said to the girl, speaking very fast, and a little gruffly:

"I want to apologize to you and Dawn. I didn't know I was a cad till I met you both. All you and Jack said about Dawn was true, too. I didn't know dogs could do such things—or would. Dawn's a better man than I am. I'm more sorry than I can say—that I hit him this morning—and that I kicked him yesterday. Won't you

—won't you tell him that, please? He might not believe it, if I told him."

But Dawn did believe it. The voice, rather than the words, told him much. And in the collie's white soul there was no room for lasting hatred against a repentant enemy. The growl died in his throat, and a light of friendliness stole into his eyes. Timidly, Rood bent over him and stroked the silken head.

"I'm sorry, Dawn, old chap!" said the man, in clumsy penitence.

Dawn's gray plume of a tail thudded softly upon the veranda floor. What was a mere broken leg, and what were a few welts, compared with the fact that he had that day saved his dear mistress from terrible danger, and had made a brand-new friend?



Bubbles

WHEN you're happy, think how long a lifetime is. When you're sad, remember you live but a day at a time.

The man who can always hit the mark should be especially careful at what he aims.

A lot of ancestors have improved mightily since they died.

Warning a woman in love is as profitable as standing at the gate and waving a red flag to keep out a bull.

I know a horse that is very like a woman. She always prances when driven near a railway station because she knows she's going to be scared.

It may take a heart to win a heart, but nerve goes a long way.

All the world loves a lover, which may account for the number of announcement cards a girl can send out.

Blessed is the girl who shuts her heart's door when summer is over and has no regrets that refuse to be barred out.

If more women kept their husbands busy buying them silk hose, there'd be less unfaithfulness.

A Million Dollars' Worth

By Frederick J. Jackson

Author of "Classic Salvage,"

"Flat-footed Road," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN A. COUGHLIN

When two young men with brains set out to make a screen star, there is bound to be something doing—and they may spring a surprise even upon themselves, as in this lively adventure described by Mr. Jackson.



"Don't you realize that if it gets across, I'll be starred?"

CHAPTER I.

IN those Arizona days, when a well-oiled six-shooter, within easy reach, was often as essential to the health of the average citizen as were his daily meals, Bob Starboard's father had been a newspaper editor. To say that the old gentleman was a fighting editor is unnecessary; he had to be one. Consequently, when the elder Starboard "cashed in," he left a name to be used as a byword in the border country. To his son and heir, he left a pair of Colt .45's and a vivid imagination.

Bob used the imagination in holding down a thirty-a-week berth on the *Sphere*, in Los Angeles; the guns he used in shooting away, on Sundays, any money that chanced to be left from the night before. A ten-cent car ride and a two-mile walk would bring him out among the cacti and yuccas; and woe betide the horned owl, alighting within easy range, or the rash cottontail scampering for home, for Bob possessed and

cultivated his parent's alertness with the trigger.

Reaching the wise-beyond-his-years, newspaper age of twenty-four, Bob began to suspect that thus far his life had been misspent. Then he met Madge Waverly, and the suspicion became a conviction.

Briefly catalogued, Madge was a baby-eyed, seductive, little morsel of blond humanity, possessed of ten thousand dollars, a weird and unsuspected sense of humor, and the firm belief that Mary Pickford was the result of a good press agent. She undoubtedly had a certain histrionic talent, and she developed this by playing small parts, supporting from time to time, prominent feminine stars of the screen. For such service she received one hundred dollars a week—some weeks.

It was that hundred dollars a week—some weeks—which took the joy of life from Bob Starboard. His steady

thirty dollars looked small in comparison, and Madge knew the amount of his salary. To be sure, she rather liked Bobb, but she liked still more the publicity he managed to slip over for her.

Now, city editors are as generous with space for publicity as is the small boy with the coreless apple; so, at the end of one week, during which Bob had allowed his loyalty to the girl to go somewhat too far, Walker, the czar of the city-room, called the young man to his desk, flashed a number of clippings in which the name of Madge Waverly appeared rather often, and bluntly asked him why he didn't marry the girl.

A heated two minutes followed. The editor, by virtue of heavier artillery, emerged bearing the flag of victory; for he incontinently dropped young Mr. Starboard from the pay roll.

"As a newspaper man, you're a bird of a press agent," snapped the wielder of the blue pencil, as a parting shot.

"Thank you," replied Bob, with a maddening smile. "You've crystallized a hunch I've cherished for some months. Guard your layout sheet henceforth as a mother guards her cheek-ild, because, when I get to going, you'll wake up some morning to find that you've given me a front page spread."

"Huh!" grunted Walker. "Any time you slip anything over on *this* paper, I'll pay you double space rates."

"Just remember that," grinned Bob, "when I send in my bill."

Then he sauntered down the street to draw from the bank the forty dollars he had saved since his first meeting with Madge. This, together with the salary he had just received, constituted his sole capital.

Finally, he set out for the apartment of Madge Waverly. After a greeting not so warm on her part as he would have liked, he sprang his big idea:

"How would you like to get a million dollars' worth of publicity?"

"Bobby, I'm afraid you have been drinking," retorted Madge, her severity tempered by her dimples. "It simply can't be done. But I'll listen." She cupped her adorable chin in equally adorable hands, and snuggled closer to him on the divan.

"Well, to begin with, we'll take a small company somewhere down along the border—Arizona preferred, because by virtue of my late father's reputation, I might be enabled to make better arrangements. We'll do Western stuff—you know the kind—and to all intents and purposes, it will be a bona-fide production. Principal episode in the scenario will be the abduction of the leading woman by a Mexican bandit."

"And I'll be the leading woman?" interjected Madge.

"You will *not*. You will be an obscure ingénue, that is, you will be, when the thing starts out."

"Oh!"

"We'll work smoothly right up to the big scene. Then, when the abduction is due, the plot curdles. There will be an abduction all right, but it will *not* be the leading woman who is carried off. It will be your own pretty little self. Get the idea? An *almost real* bandit or two will mix into the action. They steal the prettiest girl in sight. Thrills! Great excitement! Officers pursuing the villains! Gun fight! Possibility of getting government action, as well! No end of possibilities! And no end of *publicity*! How does it listen? 'Beautiful Actress Victim of Latest Mexican Outrage.' 'Charming Madge Waverly in Hands of Villa Cohorts'—oh, baby! I can see those headlines already!"

"Bobby, you're a darling!" she applauded, and proceeded to give a typical demonstration of her enthusiasm by rough-housing his hair, and bestowing upon him what a director would term "a six-foot kiss." In the

latter, she was strongly aided and abetted by the *kissee*.

"But," he pointed out cautiously, a moment or two later, "it will cost a lot of money to put this over."

"How much?"

"Several thousand—to do it up brown."

"Well, I've got the cash," she returned easily, "up to ten thousand, and it's no gamble at all. It *can't* fail! Why, Bobby, if you don't put this through for me, I'll never speak to you again. You'll be a cold-blooded piker. Don't you realize that if it gets across I'll be starved? I can write my name on almost any dotted line in the country, and fill the blank spaces with almost any figure within reason."

"Just about," affirmed Starboard. "But there is one element in the scheme that I hope I can impress strongly enough upon you—secrecy! Absolute secrecy! It is a vital necessity; one breath of suspicion anywhere, and the whole thing would fall as flat as Hindenburg's dinner engagement in Paris. The Arizona end will have to be established firmly on bed rock, and hand-rubbed to a smooth finish. It will take clever preliminary work for that, and the rest will require a director with a fine Italian hand. Whom would you suggest as a possibility?"

"Bennie Gibson—without a doubt," she replied unhesitatingly. "In the first place, Bennie rather likes me." Here Bob grimaced slightly. "In the second, his contract expires next month; and, in the third, he'd emulate Faust to put over a publicity stunt as rich as this. Yes, Bennie is the man! The Arizona end, of course, will be up to you."

"I'll take care of that. Dad's reputation will be of immense assistance in getting myself established as a fixture down there. This scheme, you see, will have to have the groundwork laid far in advance. And if you get starved, will you——"

"Yes, Bobby, I'll appoint you my business manager and publicity man. Why, Bobby dear, if you put over this darling scheme, I'll do *anything* for you!"

"If that's the case, then say 'yes' to the question I've been asking you on an average of once a week for the past five months," he begged.

She flashed her dimples, answered: "I will," then coquettishly evaded his attempted caress.

"Bobby," she broke in, a little while later, "I think you'll need some extra expense money. I have a hunch you're stony broke. You usually are," she added, with disconcerting candidness.

"Ouch!" he winced; then denied stoutly: "Not a bit of it. I've got plenty of coin."

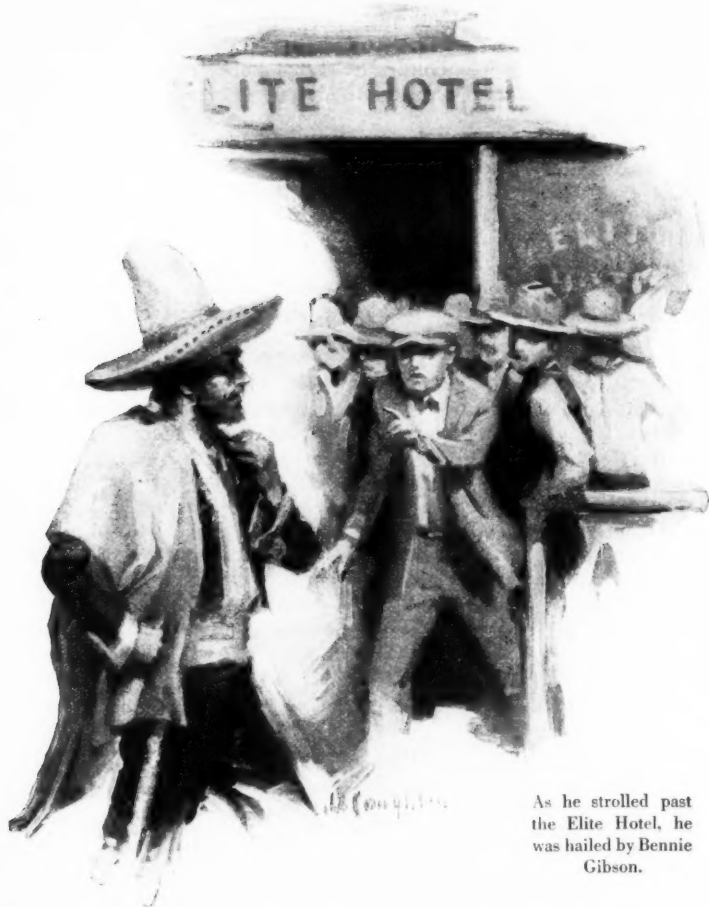
He had—for seventy dollars is plenty of money, to the reportorial mind.

"I insist upon this being my gamble," said Madge firmly. "I refuse to go into it, if you won't let me advance the expenses. I'm giving you two hundred for a starter. Take it, or I'll leave your scheme up in the air."

"You make me feel like a piker, but I can't argue with you—for several reasons," capitulated Bob. With bad grace he accepted her check.

The following morning, he packed his two Colt heirlooms and some clothing into a battered suit case, and inconspicuously left Los Angeles. Thirty hours later found him in Pinnacle, a heat-stricken, Ford-size, Arizona town, situated a stone's throw—if one can throw far enough—from the Mexican border.

The town boasted one newspaper, the *Pinnacle Press*, a semi-weekly organ, which, since the demise of the elder Starboard, had been edited by a harassed gentleman known as Emmett Moran. Draped upon Mr. Moran's person were a drooping mustache, an habitually suspicious look, and fifty-odd years of adverse circumstances.



As he strolled past the Elite Hotel, he was hailed by Bennie Gibson.

He confronted Bob with the look, and the general air of one about to spring an alibi.

"Can you use a good reporter?" inquired the young man.

A sigh of relief issued from Mr. Moran's lips.

"Nope! I do all the reporting—and a lot of other things. Hell, son!" he added more genially, "bein' as you were a stranger, I thought you were tryin' to collect a bill. Only strangers do.

But I know your earmarks now. I'll bet this paper, lock, stock, barrel, and debts, against a square meal, that your name is Starboard!" Mr. Moran stuck out a horny hand. "Well! Well! How'd you drift this direction?"

Bob coughed artistically.

"Looking for climate. I was thinking of getting a job, or buying a partnership."

At the word "partnership," Mr. Moran's ears pricked up.

"Look no further," he advised. "We have miles of climate around here, and as for the partnership, I was just figurin' on who to stick for enough cash to meet the last bill for print paper. I'll sell a half interest for one hundred dollars, and warn you that you'll be stuck, at that."

"Sold! Here's the hundred," said Bob. "Now let's get busy and take the crape off the door."

CHAPTER II.

Bob Starboard's acquisition was proclaimed to the community in the next issue of the *Press*, Editor Moran spreading himself in a half-page eulogy, to recall to his former friends memories of the elder Starboard. Results were immediate, practically the entire population of the town and surrounding country calling at the *Press* office to meet the son of "Sassafras" Starboard. In one day the subscription list doubled—paid in advance subscriptions, at that—for the old-timers hoped for a revival of Starboard journalism. Mr. Moran took a new lease on life and blew himself to a hair cut.

In short order, Bob was established as a leading citizen of Pinnacle, which was exactly what he desired. It would serve to remove any possible taint of connection with publicity work, when the time arrived to hand a sensational story to the Associated News Service.

Meanwhile, Madge Waverly had enlisted the services of the prominent motion-picture director, Bennie Gibson. The latter was enthusiastic over the scheme, for, above all else, he liked publicity. He even went so far as to offer his services gratis in putting the stunt across, provided Madge would sign a contract to engage him as her director after her name had become a household word.

Selecting the company for the proposed production was a matter for skill

and discrimination; but Bennie tackled the job with unusual vim. Of particular importance was the rôle of the Mexican bandit, and it was only after considerable thought that Bennie made his selection.

The man in question was a smooth, handsome individual, Ramon Morales, by name. Some months previously, Morales had arrived in Los Angeles. Concerning his past, he gave no information. All that any one knew of him was what could be read in his face. And that spoke for itself. He was of the high-bred, American-born Spanish type, erect of carriage—far different from the average mixed-breed Mexicans who hung about the studios to pick up odd parts and dollars. It had not been long before Morales had proved his worth as a type, and he was listed right at the top by casting directors. When he worked he received a large salary, and spent more.

Bennie knew that Morales had often been cast as a romantic Mexican gambler, until Mexican "heavies" became technically known as "the bunk." Bennie also remembered occupying a spectator's seat once at a poker game in which Morales was a participant, and recalled that the youthful grandee was capable of raising heavily before the draw, and then shoving out all his chips on a busted straight, raking in the pot, and, with unrelaxed facial expression, tossing his hand into the discard. Nor did the Spaniard ever mention, afterward, the fact that he had put one over.

Therefore, considering these characteristics, Bennie engaged him to play the part of the Mexican villain.

For some months the motion-picture industry had been retrenching. Overproduction and extreme salaries to highly touted stars who had failed to draw, had created a situation which had caused producers to break contracts, instead of making new ones.

This subnormality would shortly bring a reaction, however, and the wise ones knew it. Of the latter, Bennie Gibson was one of the wisest. But he was not adverse to taking advantage of the situation to secure a leading woman.

Now, Miss Gwendolen Phillips was not a wise virgin, by any means. Ranking fifth in a national popularity contest, her fluffy head had swelled until there remained no room for the idea that she might become divorced from her thousand-a-week job. Her employer had disillusioned her, however; and, because of his ingeniously worded contract, she had no comeback. Having spent at least twelve hundred dollars a week of her ten-hundred-dollar salary—oh, it can be done—she now possessed an empty purse, and numerous pressing creditors. And one must live.

In consequence, when Bennie Gibson offered her one hundred and fifty dollars for each seven days of work, while she did not exactly fall on his neck, she did accept the proposition—with well-feigned haughtiness and the proviso that it be advertised as being fifteen hundred. Gibson, delighted with his bargain, for Miss Phillips was indeed well and favorably known, put a press agent on the job to herald the fact that she had been engaged as star of his forthcoming, independent production, "The Land of Unbelief." It was also stated that the company was to shoot the exterior scenes in Arizona. Madge Waverly was named casually among the supporting cast, and that was all.

Only four persons were aware of the secret that "The Land of Unbelief" was purely a camouflage story, slated never to be finished. It might be mentioned here that Bennie Gibson himself wrote the story and continuity. He admitted that it was a good story—that some of it was, anyway.

It was entirely natural that the many necessary arrangements drew Bennie

Gibson and Madge together numerous times. To be sure, they were merely business conferences; but business conferences with a blonde of Madge's temperament have a tendency to develop into tête-à-têtes of the sort that have caused more woman-proof men than Bennie to fall, and fall hard. It was during the tenth of these "conferences" that his reserve broke down, and rashly he proposed.

Madge smiled contentedly. "We'll see," she said, without so much as a prick of conscience, as she recalled Starboard's similar proposal. "I signed a contract to engage you as director; but I don't remember any matrimonial clause. Still, you're a dear boy, Bennie! So, if the scheme goes over, you may have the pleasure of hearing me say 'I do' to the fatal questions."

Whereupon, Bennie Gibson, always the sane and careful man of the world, forgot, for once, all that he had ever known regarding the ways of women—and of blondes in particular—and hastened to purchase a four-hundred-dollar ring.

Bob Starboard had been located in Pinnacle exactly twenty-nine days when a dark, handsome young man stalked into the editorial office, and requested a word in private. He was Ramon Morales, erstwhile Mexican "heavy," and expert poker player. He left town again, an hour later, smiling quizzically. Forty-eight hours afterward arrived Bennie Gibson, accompanied by Madge Waverly, Gwendolen Phillips, and the remainder of the new company.

Much to the disappointment of the proprietor of the Elite Hotel, tents were pitched for the outfit a mile out of town; and everybody settled down for the coming weeks' work.

It was not until the day following that Ramon Morales again put in an appearance. On this occasion, however, he was not the debonair, clean-

shaven gentleman of before. Instead, he wore a villainous beard, and raiment none too good. As he strolled past the Elite Hotel, in full hearing of several of the townspeople, he was hailed by Bennie Gibson.

"Ever work in motion pictures?"

"No, señor," replied the ragged one.

"How much *dinero*?"

"Ten dollars a day?"

"*Bueno!*" Mr. Morales languidly manufactured a cigarette, and consented to accompany the director.

"Ten bucks a day! The lucky greaser!" enviously exclaimed one of the listeners. "More money than that poor 'cholo' probably ever saw in his life at one time." Then he hurried over to the *Press* office, in hopes that Mr. Moran might be induced to swap a bad cigar for a good local item.

It was Moran who suggested that Bob Starboard visit the picture camp and obtain a write-up thereof. Bob appeared reluctant to go. "I don't think much of picture people," said he. "They're all bunk artists."

"Little matter," replied Moran. "Get an interview. It's good local stuff, and we have an empty column."

So Bob, interviewing Gibson and Miss Phillips, turned out a sprightly story covering their impressions of the vicinity. Especially did he elaborate on the incident of the itinerant native of Mexico who had been employed at ten dollars a day.

For a week, the company shot action in nearby cañons, the favorite location being a spot some two hundred yards from the international boundary line. A post, marking the border, appeared prominently in several scenes. Indeed, it had been written especially into the continuity by Gibson.

At the end of the week, Moran again complained of a dearth of space-filling items.

"Better take a trip out to the movie people once more," he told Bob. "That

stuff is of more interest than this boiler plate."

"All right," was the response. "I'll go out to-morrow."

When the sun rose above the buttes and mesas to the southeast the following morning, it found Bob ostensibly interviewing Mr. Gibson, out on location, near the boundary line. They had drawn beyond earshot of the waiting company.

"Everything's all set," Gibson spoke in a low tone.

"Good! Are you sure that Morales understands his part thoroughly, and that there's no chance for a slip?"

"Positive! Don't worry about him. That chap has more than a vacuum beneath his hat." He turned and motioned to Morales.

The latter, clad in a Los Angeles costumer's idea of Mexican courting garments, trimmed with silver and gold lace, and wearing them well, was astride a magnificent black stallion near by. Wheeling his horse, he cantered up.

"Starboard wants to know your program," Gibson explained.

"Certainly," replied the other, in perfect English. "When I swoop down on the girls, I'm to pass up Miss Phillips, and kidnap Miss Waverly. Then I am to start south across the border and keep traveling for a few miles. I know the country, and a spot where you'll lose my trail, among the rocks. Cutting back to the border from this point, I'll recross it, after coming through Mañana Cañon. To-night I'll be hiding out in the deserted, dry homestead, close to the red mesa, about fifteen miles northwest of here. Deserted country all around, you know, and it's ten to one that no one will see us, even in the distance. After to-night, it's up to you. Is that clear?"

"Perfectly," said Bob. "Gibson has made arrangements to meet you there to-night, and to smuggle Miss Waverly,



With a yell of exultation or derision, Morales urged the horse across the border.

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"Come back, you fool! You've got it wrong!" shouted Gibson.

heavily veiled, aboard a train. She'll remain in hiding on a ranch north of San Diego, until we see fit to 'rescue' her. You can throw away your disguise and be perfectly safe."

"That's the ticket," said Gibson. Then, raising his voice as he turned to the company, "We'll rehearse this bit now. The light will be good in fifteen minutes."

A jingle of spurs, the creak of saddle leather, the plod of hoofs, and Morales rode out of sight into a nearby cañon.

"Right by that rock now, Miss Phillips," commanded Gibson. "Miss Waverly, you stand just behind her! Those three flowers there, Miss Phillips—register delight at seeing them, and stoop to pick them. Take your time

with the picking. Kill about twenty feet, and give the bandit a chance to ride up!"

"Ready!" He blew a whistle.

Immediately Morales rode into the open, and pulled up his mount as he caught sight of the girls. Glancing swiftly to right and left, he then spurred forward, covering more than half the distance while Miss Phillips pretended to pick the "prop" flowers.

"Now you see him!" shouted Gibson. "Register alarm, uncertainty! You don't know which way to run! Stay close to her, Madge!"

Morales swept up, leaned from his saddle, and attempted to slip an arm around the leading woman. He missed, as she shrank away from his grasp.

"Rotten!" howled the director. "You'll have to try it again. I thought you were a horseman! Bah! Fine bandit, you are! Play the part, man! Play the part!"

Morales cast a malevolent scowl at the director. "*Sí, señor,*" he drawled silkily. "You tell me to be bandit. *Bueno! Quien sabe?* Maybe I be bandit!" Significantly he loosened the Winchester in the sling in front of his knee.

"That's better," complimented Gibson. "That scowl is great! But put more jazz into your action!"

"A darned good actor, all right," murmured Bob in admiration. "This is going to be a pip of a story. I'll say you got his goat, and egged him into it!"

"Leave it to him to put it over right," Gibson spoke from one corner of his mouth.

Again he blew the whistle. This time Morales came into action in approved style; but there was a sudden gasp of surprise from those not in the secret, when, as he approached the girls, he leaped from his horse, pushed Miss Phillips aside and seized Madge Waverly. Almost simultaneously, he threw her across the front of the saddle, and mounted. The stallion leaped forward and wheeled to the south. With a yell of exultation or derision, Morales urged the horse across the border.

"Come back, you fool! You've got it wrong!" shouted Gibson.

Miss Phillips screamed, then fainted—or pretended to.

"Action! Camera!" shouted Gibson frantically, with a show of true, professional instinct. "By Harry, he must be a *real* bandit! This is hell—with wings! Keep cranking! That film will be worth a hundred dollars a foot to the news reels!"

"Get after him, you fellows!" he ordered, turning to three actors, made

up as cow-punchers, who were mounted. "We can't let harm come to Miss Waverly."

"We've nothing but blank cartridges," said one of the cowboys nervously. "We wouldn't have a chance!"

"You yellow cowards!" snapped Gibson, with well-simulated wrath. "Get off that horse, you!" Two seconds later the director was speeding after the fleeing Morales, leaving behind him a number of amazed persons, and a camera man who ground steadily away with his film.

Bennie Gibson was essentially a realist, which, perhaps, accounted largely for his success in his profession. And, when it came to putting realism into a publicity stunt for the girl he loved, Bennie outdid himself. "Go ahead and do just what I say," he had told Morales. "My fool neck isn't worth much, so I'll take a chance!"

Therefore, as he urged his horse up the cañon, he knew what was coming, and he deliberately rode right into it, trusting to Morales' vaunted skill with a rifle. Of the latter statement he soon had proof, for a shot split the sound of echoing hoofs beneath him. Down went the cayuse, a bullet through its heart. Bennie went sprawling over a bunch of cactus; his head slapped against a rock. Bennie saw the lights flare up, and then go out. This *was* realism—more than he had counted on!

When Bob Starboard and the assistant director reached this spot, a few minutes later, they found their chief on the point of recovering profane consciousness, a long gash on his forehead, and innumerable scratches bleeding freely.

Bennie's first coherent words proved his gameness.

"By golly," he whispered to Bob, "they'll *have* to swallow our story now!"

"Ouch! Go *easy*!" he spluttered, as

a handkerchief was lound over the cut above his eyes.

They lifted Bennie to his feet, boosted him astraddle of the horse that had been ridden by the assistant, and, with the latter, walking beside him to catch him if he should fall, made their way back to the picture camp. Leaving Gibson to be cared for, Bob galloped into town. There, he stopped at the sheriff's office to tell the startling news; then hastened to find a doctor. When the medical man had been located, and dispatched to the camp, Bob hurried to his lodgings, buckled on a cartridge belt and the two Colt heir-looms, and returned to the courthouse to join Sheriff Bronson and the posse he had gathered.

"Gosh! This is great stuff—right out of the real, old West!" he told himself exultant'y as he saw five horsemen mount and start out of town with a businesslike air. He ran for his horse.

"Come here!" said a voice. "Come with us."

Bob had paid no attention to a flyver in the foreground, an abused-looking little car, with one fender missing, and the other three blistered and crumpled. Then he caught sight of the sheriff behind the wheel. In the tonneau sat two grizzled men, fondling rifles on their knees.

"Hop in!" ordered Bronson. Bob hopped, and the car started.

The little machine snorted and banged up the rutty main street, across the open country, toward the cañon through which Morales had ridden. They passed the mounted members of the posse just beyond the edge of town. In no time at all, they were bumping and skidding into the mouth of the ravine.

The going was rough, but the imperturbable sheriff merely clinched his teeth tighter on the stump of a cigar, and advanced the gas lever. The car crashed into a chuck hole.

Bang! A tire blew out. The sheriff swore. "Broken spring, too!" he grunted in disgust.

Bang! an instant later. A man lying on the ground some fifty yards ahead had arisen suddenly to his haunches, and taken a pot shot at the posse.

Out came Bronson's Colt. It barked simultaneously with a rifle in the hands of one of the old-timers in the rear seat. The man in the distance fell back.

"Great Caesar! What have we run into? Look at that!" ejaculated Bob.

Still further up the cañon, lay three dead men, and, close by, the body of the black stallion that Morales had ridden.

"Been a grand little free-for-all fracas," said Bronson.

Cautiously the posse walked forward, stopping first by the man Bronson had shot. He was dressed as the other three—heavy, high-topped sombrero, khaki coat, dungaree overalls, and boots. Two heavy cartridge belts were crossed on the chest of each dead man, while, near by, were several automatic pistols and two Mauser rifles.

Bronson lifted his hat, screwed up one side of his face, and began scratching the back of his head.

"It sure beats me," he confessed. "Mexican has met Mexican, and the Grecks ain't in it with a Mex. Looks like our bandit didn't have any monopoly on the banditin' around here. He sure busted into trouble—and handled it as though he liked it. If he bumped off these four *hombres*, and got away with the girl, he must have plenty of guts. He's liable to be a hot one to handle. There's an agreement with Mexico that officers can cross the border on a warm trail, so, take it from me, we'll mix with him! We'll strike out as soon as the horses arrive."

"What about the girl?" was Bob's tense query. "What might have happened to her?"

"The worst—either way, whether



The bearded man promptly dropped the woman from his horse, and cut loose with a Winchester.

our lone coyote carried her off by himself, or if the others in the band captured them both. In the latter case, the only hope is that they will want to hold her for ransom. By the hoof-prints here, I judge that about a dozen riders were headin' for the border. Might have been figurin' on pullin' off a private raid to-night, and were sizin' up the country."

Shortly, the second section of the posse came galloping up. Bronson ordered one of the men to dismount, and appropriated his horse. With four of his hard-riding, swift-shooting deputies, he once again took up the trail.

As Bob walked back to Pinnacle, he mentally outlined the story he would write. The shooting of Gibson's horse by Morales had been according to program, but the dead stallion and the four dead Mexicans formed a decided complication. It was a tragedy that would convince any one who might doubt the truth of the story—too convincing entirely, Bob admitted to himself; for inwardly there had grown a great fear that the girl he loved might have come to harm undreamed of. If Morales had succeeded in fighting off his attackers, and getting away with Madge on horses which had been ridden by the bandits, all was well; but Bob was none too optimistic that this was the case. If the Spaniard failed to show up at the deserted shack, and Bronson were unable to overtake members of the other Mexican band—Bob did not like to think of it.

Back in Pinnacle, he found that Bennie Gibson had been placed in bed, at the doctor's home. His injuries, though painful, were not serious. In a week he would be out again. At his bedside Bob found the camera man.

"I'm the fall-guy, I guess," Gibson said, with a forced grin, "but wasn't it a great stunt? Collins shot fifty feet of me, wobbling in the saddle, when

I rode back to camp. He's going out now and grind a bunch of scenery, including the dead horses and dead greasers. Then we'll tack on all the footage we have that shows Madge, together with what we got when Morales kidnaped her, and rush the stuff to the laboratory. Believe me, boy, the film exchanges will be bidding for this split reel! Get the story to the Associated News as soon as you can. Give them a follow-up yarn every day. Leave it to them to get 'stills' of Madge in Los Angeles. They'll have to play this story up, they can't do otherwise. It's a knock-out! I'll bet that every syndicate in the country will be rushing its own correspondents down here. It's a cinch they will, if the government delivers a little action. Wow! Will *that* be more publicity? Will it?"

"Christmas-tree stuff," agreed Bob. "Holy smoke! We certainly struck a press agents' paradise. Well, so long! I'm getting to work!"

First, he wrote a three-column story for his paper, making two carbon copies. Then, further to remove suspicion of press-agent work, he haggled by telegraph over the price for the article. The Associated News raised its bid three times, and won out from its competitors. Bob was ordered to rush the story by wire. After blue-penciling a carbon copy, to shorten it, he left it with the telegraph operator. Then, with the consciousness of a job well done, he hurried back to Gibson.

His work now was to get in touch with Morales and Madge, at the deserted ranch house. Gibson was to have hired a machine and picked them up that night, but the program would have to be changed. Bob was afraid to risk going out with Larkin, the garage proprietor, who possessed the only machine in town that could be hired. Larkin did his own driving, and had to account to his wife for every minute spent out of town. Mrs. Lar-

kin was an incorrigible gossip; therefore Bob saw that it was just as well that Gibson's plans be changed.

"Get a horse, then," suggested Gibson, after Bob had told his fears with regard to Larkin. "Let Madge ride back with you, and we'll smuggle her out of town. We can't let her stay out all night with that Morales chap. He's too damned handsome to be trusted, where women are concerned. I'm getting worried!"

"You and I both," said Bob.

"'Atta boy," grinned Bennie. "Good luck to you! This means a lot to me—more than you think!"

"Same here, old top," was Bob's inward comment. "If you only knew just how strong a reason *I* have for wanting her back!"

Two hours later, when young Mr. Starboard, astride of Moran's horse, and riding into the setting sun, hopefully approached the shack on the desert, he was greeted by a bullet that zipped beneath his armpit and hummed off down the cañon behind him. Some one had thoughtfully fired through the unglazed window of the cabin. Simultaneously, as he instinctively ducked low, Bob caught sight of about a dozen horses, hitched to the posts of what had once been a corral. Another bullet whizzed through the approximate space that his head had occupied a scant second before, and Starboard suddenly came to the conclusion that there were persons in the immediate vicinity who did not like him or his presence thereabouts.

Several assorted chills began playing tag, up and down his spine. Hastily he wheeled his horse to head in the opposite direction. The move was made just in time to let a Mauser bullet catch the animal behind the left ear. Bob managed to disengage his feet and sprawl clear of the wreck, as the animal stumbled, and dropped in its tracks.

Two yards to his left, as he faced

up the cañon, was a rock possibly eighteen inches in height. A rapid, instinctive movement on hands and knees brought him behind this natural barrier. Then he unbuttoned his coat, brought up his two Colts, and, still half dazed by the shock of his fall, endeavored to collect his thoughts.

If any remaining doubts concerning his predicament had still remained in his mind, they would have been dissipated by the bullets that began to glance from the rock before him and go singing weirdly into space. Absently placing the muzzle of one six-shooter athwart the top of his breastwork, Bob stole a hasty look, to discover what was doing. In the doorway of the shack stood a Mexican, busily engaged in wasting ammunition. Bob found the sights of his Colt directly in line with the spot where the cartridge belts crossed on the other's chest. Almost without thinking, he pulled the trigger. The movement was half involuntary, for his mind, as yet, was not functioning with any degree of precision. Therefore he was frankly surprised to see the other wilt across the shack's threshold.

His chance shot had immediate effect. The firing slackened abruptly. Only one man was shooting at him now, and this one suddenly concluded that discretion was by far the best virtue at that moment, for he drew back from the window.

A minute passed by. Bob managed to shake the haze from his brain, and saw, that by reason of the towering mesas on either hand, he was safe from anything but a direct frontal attack.

Then a Mexican appeared from behind the rear of the shanty. Frantically he ran toward the horses. Came another bandit, another and another. Bob counted ten in all. One by one they had dropped from the rear window, and, keeping the shack in the line of fire as long as possible before tak-

ing to the open, sneaked for their horses. One of them led away the mount of his fallen comrade.

This particular gang of petty thieves had made good their boasts to their native admirers of crossing the border, but the American brand of shooting was too deadly. Earlier that same day they had bumped into disaster in the form of a bearded man, accompanied by a woman. One of them had taken a shot at this stranger. The move had proved unwise, for the bearded man had promptly dropped the woman from his horse, and cut loose with a Winchester. Never before had they seen shooting like that. Four of them had tumbled from their saddles before the others knew what was happening. The rest had fled, after a few, hasty, wild shots. True, they had killed the horse of the bearded devil, as they had of the gringo who had now approached the cabin. But of what avail? *Caramba!* They were going back to Mexico, where a bandit had a chance!

And fate had still another sour pickle in the barrel for this band of already sadly discouraged raiders. Crossing the border, and returning in the twilight up what they supposed was the safe and deserted Mañana Cañon, they ran into Sheriff Bronson and his four deputies. The panic-stricken Mexicans opened fire,

as they spurred their horses. But again they were out of luck. Three of them, one badly wounded, managed to escape. Five lay dead or dying, and two were captured. It was from these that Bronson learned the facts already recounted. Having obtained this information, Bronson released them, having no further use for them, and no authority to hold them, south of the border. They would be good Mexicans afterward, he figured.

As for Bob, he did not waste his fire when the bandits streaked back toward Mañana Cañon, for he saw that Madge and Morales were not with them. A frantic but futile search of the cabin and the immediate vicinity brought no result. Puzzled, fearful, he began the long walk back to Pinnacle.

It was midnight when he arrived,



"But what's that, compared with a million dollars' worth of husband?" she retorted blithely.

suffering from the combined afflictions of a tortured mind, sore muscles, and blistered feet. A talk with Gibson and the returned sheriff served, to some extent, to relieve his mind; a hot bath soothed his muscles; a liberal use of adhesive plaster repaired his feet. Then he went to bed and tried to sleep.

When he awoke the next morning, he found that the publicity work had been taken out of his hands. From Los Angeles had arrived three special correspondents and an agent of the department of state. Coming as it did on the heels of several similar outrages, the kidnaping of Madge Waverly was the last straw. A too patient government awoke, and began to start trouble. Three troops of cavalry were being rushed from Nogales, two special trains were carrying a regiment of infantry from El Paso, and several aeroplanes were due to arrive at any moment.

"Oh, boy!" gloated Bob. "We'll be on the front pages for a week!" Then, more soberly, "But where's Madge?"

"I'm worried stiff, myself," confessed the director. "There are phases of this affair that make me blamed uneasy!"

"It would be plain hell if anything has happened to her!" added Bob. "I tell you, Gibson, when a man's fiancée——"

"What?" exclaimed the other, half starting from his bed. "How did you know that we were to be married?"

"You? Wake up, Bennie; that fall has affected your mind. It happens that Madge is to marry *me*! I got it from her own lips, so it ought to be authentic."

"So did I." And then, to Bob's amazement, the director threw back his head and laughed inordinately.

For more than a week, Starboard and Gibson remained in Pinnacle. Bob amused himself by gathering clippings from the Los Angeles *Sphere*, and com-

puting bills, at double space rates. If he only dared to present them—— Frankly, both men were sadly puzzled. They were in a curious state of mind, not certain whether they should mourn or exult. As press agents, they yielded the palm to no one; as lovers, they were ready to admit that they were in the primary class. One thing worried them greatly. In making his report, Sheriff Bronson mentioned the fact that he had discovered the wheel tracks of a heavy automobile, some fifteen miles south of the border. Near by, where the car had turned and obviously headed south, two jaded horses stood listlessly in what shade they could find. From their saddle equipment, Bronson judged they had originally been ridden by two of the bandits Morales had killed. It was at this point that the posse had turned back to Mañana Cañon.

It was on the tenth day following the pseudo-real abduction that a telegram came to Bob. It was signed "Midgy," his pet name for Madge, and read as follows: "Come immediately to Hotel Eddington, El Paso."

"What do you make of that?" inquired Bob, tossing the message to the director. "It's from Madge."

"Search me," answered Gibson. "But we'll soon find out. When does the next train leave?"

At nine o'clock the next morning, the two strode into the lobby of the El Paso hostelry. Not knowing under what name Madge might be registered, they took a chance and inquired for Morales. The gentleman in question presently sauntered from the elevator, and walked toward them with extended hand. Amazedly they stared at him; for this was far from being the Morales they had known. In Los Angeles, he had put on considerable "dog," but this was worse. He was now faultlessly garbed in approved morning dress—in *El Paso, mind you*—and carried himself with an air of social

dignity that is altogether beyond the art of the average actor when he attempts the rôle. On his waistcoat, almost hidden by the coat, sparkled the diamond-studded emblem of the most exclusive Greek letter society of Harvard. Yes, indeed, Fifth Avenue would have been hard put to it to duplicate his air of wealth and breeding.

"Gentlemen, you seem surprised," remarked Morales.

"Slightly!" gulped the director. "Just slightly, that's all."

"And no doubt, explanations are due," added their host. "There are numerous details that have necessarily been kept from you."

"So it seems," was Bob's strained comment.

"That is why my wife and I thought it a matter of courtesy to see you before we started for the Orient, on our honeymoon."

"Your wife?" they gasped in unison.

"Yes, the former Margaret Brown, known to you as Madge Waverly," stated the erstwhile bandit smilingly.

"Oh!" said Bob, and Gibson was too weak to add anything.

At this juncture, the young bride herself appeared on the scene.

Gibson and Bob grudgingly admitted to themselves that never had she seemed more charming.

"It is so sweet of you to have come," she exclaimed, flashing a glance from her blue eyes that disarmed them completely. "I should *never* have forgiven you, if you hadn't hurried! Besides, Ramon thought, since you have been so adorably nice to me, that we ought to explain how it all came about."

"Forgive *us*!" gasped Bob weakly.

"Very kind of Ramon," said the director. "Shoot!"

"There isn't much to explain," she went on. "Ever since I met Ramon I just *knew* I was going to be his wife. He is *so* romantic! And when he suggested that we make it an elopement, and in *such* a romantic way, I just *had* to consent! You know how romantic my temperament is, Bobby."

"Yeh, both of us!" he answered dryly.

"When he carried me off in that abduction scene, he had already planned that we should be met by a car from his ranch, which would return us to the border. I thought it would be *such* fun to keep you guessing!"

"Fun!" echoed Gibson. "A touchy cactus also had a lot of fun at my expense. Deliver me——"

"But we had a terrible, *terrible* time when we met those bandits," she continued, ignoring Gibson's interruption. "Ramon was *wonderfully* brave, though, and we got away safely. Look at this wedding ring! It has been in Ramon's family for generations. Isn't it wonderful?"

"Sure," said Bob, looking at her face instead of the ring. Then, suddenly, "But what about the stunt we put over? Gibson has had three wires, offering contracts for you. There's a million dollars' worth of publicity lying around loose and waiting to be cashed in on."

"But what's that, compared with a million dollars' worth of husband?" she retorted blithely.

"Great guns!" swore Gibson. "Let's get some air! I'm glad I'm in Texas right now, instead of Arizona."

"Why Texas?" inquired Bob, as they stepped into the street.

"Because, you poor nut, Arizona is a bone-dry state!"

"Lead the way," said Bob.



The Secret Sin of the Prim Little Man

An Adventure

By Edwina LeVin

Author of "False Colors," "Happiness à la Mode," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY O'CARTER

THE way of the adventurer is often hard, but the true adventurer goes on adventuring, even after such experiences as I had with the prim little man. Being a woman, I should probably write it with an "ess," but adventuress implies intrigue and gain, and as my adventuring includes neither of these, I take the liberty of chopping off the last syllable.

He was the attorney for the plaintiff in a divorce case which I managed to adventure into. I went with the wife to collect the evidence that friend husband obligingly fixed for her to gather—but that's another story. This one is about the nice, prim little lawyer who took my testimony. I had never seen him before, and I never expected to see him again. He was so small and precise that he amused me intensely. He wore a perfect-fitting little gray suit, and had a perfectly trimmed little gray mustache. He was somewhat bald, somewhat gray of head, and all that is orderly and regular. Also, he had an impressive manner, knew exactly how much to let you say and just when to stop you, and was altogether staid and dignified. In short, he was the last person in the world you would ever expect to be guilty of an indiscretion.

Beyond a passing amusement, he excited no interest in me. Thoroughly discreet people seldom have any ad-

ventures in them. They always know what to do, and do it. And you always know beforehand what it will be, and are bored by it. They have no surprises for themselves or for you.

And so it was that, immediately after the divorce, I forgot the little lawyer. I should have mentioned that the case was tried up-State, safely away from the New York papers, so that I was disappointed in not getting a "look in" at the New York Supreme Court.

And this is where fortuity, not good form in fiction, steps in.

Some five months later, that same friend having an entirely different case in the New York Supreme Court invited me once more to accompany her. Feeling that I had been cheated in the former case, and, as always, in search of adventure, I gladly accepted another peep into the highways and byways of the law.

We were seated inside the center railing of the big, heavy-columned courtroom, when directly the little lawyer bustled in, carrying his leather portfolio and some loose papers. He recognized me at once, gave my hand a discreetly cordial pressure, and twisted his precise mustache in a correct smile.

He sat down with impressive, but subdued stir, and began to go over his papers. The judge was already in court, and was trying a case for a lovely woman who declared she could

not live on fifty thousand dollars a year alimony. The judge, evidently agreeing, charged her husband to pay the amount she asked, and the case was dismissed. Then, the clerk on the judge's right rose to say there were no more cases on the calendar for that day. So we got up and went out, I, feeling more cheated than ever.

My friend, the little lawyer, and I were leaning against the iron railing in the subway waiting for our train. My friend walked up the platform, leaving the two of us alone for a moment, when, to my unbounded surprise, the correct little lawyer whispered:

"Won't you come down and have lunch with me to-morrow? And I'll take you over to see the Curb."

He had heard me express only a few minutes before the wish to go down into Wall Street during its busy hour.

"I shall be delighted," I replied without hesitation. A true adventurer never hesitates.

Before we had time, however, to fix the house or place, my friend returned, and I saw at once that the little man did not want her to know.

I went home tingling with adventurous amusement and wonder.

That correct little lawyer! He had not asked my phone number, and I knew he would not ask my friend for it. I could have called him, but I had a fancy to let him find the way for himself.

At eleven o'clock the following morning my phone rang. His voice sounded over the line. Would I come down to his office—say at one o'clock—or would I prefer Peacock Alley, at the Waldorf? I preferred his office.

Curious as to how he got my number, which is not in the directory, I went, and encountered my first surprise. His offices, spacious, magnificently furnished in a most stately manner, formed a curious setting for the little man. I was ushered into his private office.

Waving me to a seat, he sat primly on a chair before his great mahogany desk. I waited. Was this discreet little man in search of romance?

He chatted in his correct way about things in general, the war, my work, and court scandals. Then he inquired where I would like to go for lunch. I preferred some weird, out-of-the-way place—something different from the uptown cabarets. He knew the very place. It was the oldest inn in New York, with sawdust on the floor, and barmaids to serve one—an English chop house.

It proved all he had said, and more, with its dark, uncovered rafters and walls hung with curious fish, quaint mugs, old rigging from ships, stuffed fish of marvelous form, and a pirate's boot for decorations. I was delighted, up to this point.

After lunch, he informed me that he had placed the entire afternoon at my disposal. I had heard him refuse, over the phone, to see several clients, saying he would be in court all afternoon. Eagerly I awaited his next move.

He proceeded—clearly he had planned it—to show me lower New York, the Curb, with its mad folk waving and yelling, St. Paul's Church, with its two flags over Washington's pew, and then, the oldest hotel in New York, made of red bricks brought from Holland, where the waiters are dressed in colonial fashion. After that, we visited the aquarium, which had once been the amusement place of New York; and the customhouse, Bowling Green, with its dry fountain and old iron fence that had once surrounded King George's monument; the old Stevens house, where Jenny Lind used to live, and many other places—all intensely interesting.

It was a lovely spring day, and I was in my glory.

While the adventurer accepts his adventures as they come, he knows, never-

theless, that only an adventurer adventures without motive.

What motive had this prim little lawyer, who seemed so bent on pleasing me? Why had he made a whispered engagement with me, and then given me a whole afternoon?

At four o'clock he turned back toward his office where, at his insistence, I had left my book.

When we were in the office I picked up the book and made ready to go.

"Oh, don't go yet!" he cried, a note of alarm in his voice. "Sit down, for just a few minutes."

I sat. Now for a look at the little man's soul!

He drew a chair up very close to me, and began showing me from the window the Statue of Liberty and various points of interest. Several times he hitched his chair a fraction of an inch closer. I listened, and watched, and waited. Directly he drew a deep breath, and plunged.

"My dear," he said, "it seems too good to be true that you are really here in my office. I never wanted to know anybody so much in my life!"

"Isn't that rather thick?" I laughed.

"Not at all," he returned in his serious way. "See this." He drew an address book out of his pocket, and showed me my own address. "I got it from the court records," he confided, "and have carried it around all these months, hoping to see you again."

"If you wanted to see me so much, why didn't you call me?" I asked.

"I had no excuse," he answered confidently. "I couldn't think of anything in the world to phone you about that wouldn't have seemed presumptuous."

"I write," I said. "It wouldn't have been so bad had you called me up to say how much you liked some one of my stories. It's been done!"

"I thought of that, and I sometimes ran through the magazines hoping to find you; but there are so many of

them! I inquired about you from your friend, and hinted in every way to get something that would give me a clew."

"But my friend could so easily have told you, had you asked her outright."

"Yes, but I'm married," he replied sadly, "and it might have looked strange."

"True," I said musingly, and waited for further elucidation.

"I hope we are going to be good friends," he continued. "Somehow I feel that I have waited all my life for you."

He said it so earnestly, so naïvely, just as though it had never been said before; and I received it as gravely as though I had not heard it times out of mind—this being man's favorite phrase. Sometimes I have wondered whether he believes it himself, or whether he just expects to be believed.

The little man was getting along well. He fidgeted, and looked out the window.

"Have you ever felt like that?" he asked. "As if all your life you had waited for just one person?"

"I never exactly thought of it," I replied noncommittally, at the same time repressing a smile as I recalled how many times I had said these same words.

"Well, it seems that way to me," he went on, still not looking at me. "I get so blue and discouraged. I need you terribly, my dear."

It was almost time for him to reach over and take my hand; but he did not.

"You must be morbid," I suggested. "If I were a prosperous lawyer—"

"Oh, it isn't that!" he broke in, with a sigh. "I have a good practice, and I'm not blue in the sense you mean; but it seems as if all my life I've been so busy that I've never had a chance to do the things I've wanted to do; but now that you've come, I have great hopes! It is dreadful to go on work-



"If you wanted to see me so much, why didn't you call me?" I asked.

ing and working and never doing what one wants to do."

He was silent for a minute. There

was a deep melancholy in his mild, gray eyes. I felt that he wanted me to help

him out. But no doubt of my attitude

toward him had yet entered his mind. He clearly took it for granted that I was in full agreement with him. Looking at the little prim, gray creature sitting there, taking me so entirely for granted, I had an intense desire to shake it soundly for its foolishness, and yet was inclined to see to what lengths it would go.

"I have a confession to make," he said at last, with that deep sigh of his.

Ah, how many confessions is a woman called upon to hear in the days of her youth!

"I feel that you understand me," he went on. "I have felt it ever since that day when you sat in the witness chair, so cool and sure of yourself. My wife is a splendid woman; but she doesn't understand me."

"So few wives do understand their husbands," I returned, struggling to keep my face as grave as his own.

"You have a sense of humor, too," he went on, summing me up in his precise way, as if handling a case. "I discovered that, that day. I like a woman with a sense of humor. It's a thing I lack, I admit it. So you see, I just knew that you were exactly the woman, out of all the world, that I wanted to know—that I must know!"

"It's sweet of you to say so," I remarked, with faint sarcasm.

"Not at all. It's true. Oh, my dear, if you only knew how I've wanted to meet you! I've known for years that you were just around the corner; that some day I would suddenly come face to face with you. At times I would grow afraid; but always I waited, and now—here you are! And I don't intend to let you get away from me!"

I began to get uneasy. Once I had met an Italian who had been waiting for me "for years and years," and who, upon finding me, had insisted that I commit suicide with him, so that we might not be parted again. He even

had the dagger ready. I escaped; but a year later he found some other who was not so fortunate, and the two of them went over the border together.

Had this prim little lawyer lost his mind?

An adventurer's life is full of hair-breadth escapes, as well as of ludicrous incidents. But he waits at all costs for the adventure. So I did.

"You may be mistaken," I suggested hopefully. "I may not be she at all—the *she* you have waited for these many years."

"Oh, yes, you are!" He stated it positively.

"But how do you know? You have seen me only twice before to-day."

"You testified you were a writer—earned your living in that way," he said thrillingly.

Was he going to offer me charity?

"And that you had once been on the stage," he went on dramatically. "So you see, I knew!"

Ah, it was neither madness nor charity, but romance! An actress! The very name implies glamour, romance, and the unconventional.

"What has that to do with you?" I asked justifiably.

"Everything!" he stated fervently. "You are the exact person I've been looking for, to help me do the thing I've wanted to do, and couldn't do without you."

"What is it you want to do?" I asked.

"Wait," he replied, rising briskly. "I have something to show you." He went to a little cabinet, opened a drawer; then came back and thrust something into my hand.

"I have written a play!" he said, with a beatific smile.

And I felt myself in rapport with the young man in a café who realized that the pretty girls who smiled in his direction were smiling at his pocket-book, not at him.

He Hated Women!

By Katharine Haviland Taylor

Author of "Cecilia of the Pink Roses," "Barbara of Baltimore," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY CLARENCE ROWE

THIS story is about a man who had too many friends and too much Christmas, and about a girl who had very few friends and almost no December twenty-fifth. It also concerns a sewing basket that was bought at a "Gift Shop," and, of course, you know just what kind it was. It was beautiful, in the first flush of youth, with its puckers of pink silk lining holding out inviting arms to dust. But it was clearly designed for a gift shop and the woman who drops into those places, looks around wildly and mutters: "There's Cousin Jenny, and Agnes—I mustn't forget her—and—let me see, Herbert's teacher—something useful—and the ice man— My soul! where's my list?" Well, the little basket was designed for that sort, and for the last December 24th shoppers who are so near to swooning that they would buy porch furniture for Eskimos without the least sense of any lack of fitness.

And this story includes, too, a woman who shopped until she was tired and cross, and yet was happy—and a girl who hadn't any shopping to do and was thoroughly rested, yet was miserable.

The time, by the way, is December, and the place, New York.

Lieutenant Jimmy Simcox, a pleasant-faced, tall, thin young man with a limp, tired eyes, and a nervous manner, stood in "The Owl Gift Shop" by a table that was laden with "gifts." And they were destined to stay gifts! No one would be able to give them a permanent home. They were bound to

be put in tissue paper in some one's bottom drawer and to be given later for bridge prizes—or drawn out in emergencies— You always forget Jane's birthday, don't you, until the night before—at two-thirty? And then you sit up in bed with that cold-shower sensation, and say: "My heavens! Jane!"

Well, the "gifts" were that sort—the sort you *have* to use for Jane!

There were incense burners that wouldn't permit anything to burn, and nut bowls with papier-mâché crackers; near these were gilt shoe trees that were rheumatic in the joints. Many a pair of perfectly good shoes has had to go through life stifled by clinging, gift-shop shoe trees. There were powder puffs that had grown old and gray, waiting all year for the weary Christmas shopper to fall upon them with moans of relief. There were clothes hangers that were built for the shoulders of Hercules; and, of course, standing ash trays, which tipped over if a door closed in the next room. Also there was a loud chorus of color from the usual group of painted tie racks.

These made Lieutenant Jimmy Simcox find his voice and bring it out for an airing.

"Of all the damn-fool things!" he said viciously to his sister, a matronly little blonde who had a married appearance. "Why you had to bring me here!"

His sister smiled in answer, then surveyed the table and her list, tapping a pencil against her lips.

"You can't keep up this avoiding peo-

ple," she said, after a moment which had evidently been filled with mental sorting and distributing. "And after a while you won't want to— There's nothing to be ashamed of in being a hero and having the *croix de guerre*— I don't see anything the matter with that tie rack. I'd thought of getting one for Uncle Peter. It's so difficult to buy things for people who have *everything*!"

"Don't!" entreated Lieutenant Jimmy Simcox. "*Don't!* What the devil would *he* use it for? In bed with rheumatism, isn't he? Well, he couldn't fire it at a yowling tomat, and that's the only use *I* ever found for 'em!"

"I painted one for you the first year you were at Yale," said his sister in an injured tone. "I remember sitting up very late to do it—I was *so tired*—"

"Oh, Lord!" said Jimmy. "Now I've done it—" He smiled ruefully on the small, blond person who was again gazing in a distracted manner at the counter. "Guess I can't fix that, can I?" he said inquiringly.

"It would take some tact," she answered; and then—"Uncle Peter, Aunt Harriet—something useful, I think—Josie's children, three, eight, ten, and four—"

"Twenty-five," summed up the erring lieutenant. "Bully for Josie! Has she named 'em all, or are they numbered?"

"You're very coarse," said the small, blond person. "I can never get used to men's jokes— Do you think a book would be 'good for Uncle Peter?'"

"Uh-huh."

"What?"

"Er—oh, I don't know. Anything. *Anything*, Grace," he repeated. "You women always know just what to get. Lord, a man doesn't! Can't we go now? I'm fed up on this stuff."

Grace did not answer immediately. When she did speak, her voice was none

too steady. "I'm simply *dead*," she said. "My feet are not feet any more, they are aching lumps of iron. My head has thumped for a week. Every time I ask Henry about what to get for some one, he does that, too—just as you did. He says, 'Oh, I don't know, dear, anything. You're so *clever* about getting things—' and I have to buy *everything*! He has millions of relatives—millions—all of them erratic. Last year I sent a corkscrew—a good-looking one—to an uncle who is a prohibition crank, and he hasn't written since— Lots of money, too—not that one plans—and yet, he *is* single, and there's no sense of his money going into a home for prohibitionists—that's what he threatens. And then I sent a beautiful pair of suspenders to some one on the list whom Henry had marked 'Bill—practical,' and I found it was a woman, Lillian, and that every one had called her 'Bill' since babyhood because she was something of a sport. I simply labeled the packages, and Henry did condescend to address them, and there you are! She must think we're crazy! She never thanked us!"

"Why didn't he ask what was inside?" asked Jimmy Simcox.

"I didn't have time to answer. Those things weren't put up until Christmas Eve, and the tree was going in, and the children *would* jump out of bed every three minutes, and I was *so* afraid they'd catch cold. I had to be in eight places at once—"

"H'm!" said her brother. "What's the sense of all this fuss? To be frank, I think it's asinine. You are almost dead, almost dead, and killing yourself over sending presents to people for whom you don't give a whoop—can't you see it?"

"Well, I have to," said Grace. "How can I stop? Oh, dear! Look at *that* silly thing!" She pointed to a pink sewing basket, artfully quilted and puffed, and holding everything in the

world that could be even remotely associated with sewing baskets.

"If some one gave me *that*," she said, "I would have hysterics!"

There was a noise at the door and the young lieutenant gasped as his sister nodded and smiled. And then there was a flutter and a rustle of silks, and Lieutenant Simcox found his hand clasped closely.

"This is *the hero!*" he heard.

He answered by a strained grin and a rising color.

"Do tell us about it, lieutenant," he heard in another voice. "*How* did you feel as you *faced death?*"

He gulped, cast a despairing look at his sister, and muttered something about an appointment and then, for an invalid, made an astoundingly rapid dash for the door. His sister, after a few soothing words, followed. When she joined him her expression, although amused, showed annoyance.

"Will you tell me," she demanded, "why you have to act as if you had been robbing banks? Is there any reason why you shouldn't tell people who ask you something of your experiences? Last week I went to one of Gladys Margraves' afternoons, and had the most thrilling time listening to Captain Fox, author of 'Fox in the Trenches,' tell about things that happened to him. The women simply adored it, and he shook hands with us all in the sweetest way——"

"H'm!" said Jimmy.

"He had the most magnetic eye, and he had gone through such positive agonies! He was gassed eight or nine times, and had sixteen operations, and lay in a shell hole for forty-eight hours; and he limps so attractively——"

Jimmy, who had gone to the curb to signal a taxi, returned with a set jaw



"If some one gave me *that*," she said, "I'd have hysterics!"

and a look of determination in his eyes.

"Look here, Grace," he said, "you know I'm not that sort. I simply—oh, great hat!—I simply can't slush around about what's happened to me. Some chaps can, and some can't; I'm one of the 'canters'— Why, it makes me sick to think of it! Thank God, it's over! I want to forget it— I can't imagine that I'll ever be able to tell any one how I felt and feel about it, though. It's gone too deep."

The taxi drew nearer, they got in, and he slammed the door.

"I suppose you're disappointed," he ventured wistfully.

"I had hoped, you know," she faltered, "that—that you'd get over your aversion to society—after you'd left it for so long—that a lack of it might make you realize its good side—that you would tell people how it was over there, and let them see how nice you are—"

"And cease to be a social submarine?"

"You aren't that. It's simply that you're lazy and won't make the effort. Are you coming down to Beachwood for Christmas?"

"No," said Jimmy.

There was a silence.

"Very well," said Grace. "I won't urge you. Here we are."

She got out with the femininely aloof manner which only those who are deeply injured don. Her younger brother relapsed into gloom. He picked up her muff from the taxi floor and followed her into the apartment house. She was standing by the elevator, staring fixedly at a brass plate which stated that the elevator was fireproof, fall-proof, and examined every two weeks by a corps of elevator inspectors. Jimmy looked at her with a very humble and entreating look.

"Oh, look here, Grace——" he began.

"You're losing the best of life," she

said. "To seal yourself up, deliberately—to segregate yourself— And I'd planned the dearest little *teas*!"

"Wish I was back in France!"

"What did you say, James?"

"Nothing. Oh, darn it! You know just how I hate house parties and Christmas fuss! Then, because I won't go down there and wear a paper cap that I get out of one of those—those crackers," he continued lamely, "and follow some giggling simp of a girl, who wiggles around under the mistletoe, and wash another's face in snow, and sing carols at six in the morning, when any sane person would be snoring—then you swell up and get peeved! Every one would give me presents, and I don't know what to say when I have to thank them. Last year a stenographer wrote my thank-you notes—smart girl!"

"What did you say when the *croix de guerre* was presented?" asked his sister witheringly.

"I didn't say. I saluted. And anyway, there weren't any women around. I hate 'em!"

The elevator descended, and the door opened. Grace stepped in, and Jimmy was dismayed to see in the carriage of her head what he termed her "Lady Vere de Vere" mood. "All right," he thought, "you can run Henry and the kids around, but I'm not going down to Beachwood!" The elevator slid up, stopped, and the door opened.

"Mother," said a little girl of six, who stood waiting, "so many packages have come—one is the laundry, but the rest are Christmas— And Bobby fell down and bumped his head terribly— And papa wonders if you remembered great-aunt Elizabeth—he says last year——"

"Yes, certainly I remembered her. Does your father think I'd make that same mistake twice? Is he home? Where's your hair ribbon? You've been in my powder— Run ahead,

dearie. Jim, will you *please* open the door?"

Inside, the small hall was piled high with bundles. An umbrella was trying to hide under a sofa pillow, and Jim realized that tact must keep his eyes elsewhere. He never carried one, but he now recalled Grace's having asked him whether he didn't need one, her eyes lighting when he said he had none, and her utter disregard of his subsequent remarks about their uselessness. There was a round bundle which the small maiden who had waited at the elevator was fingering.

"There are three standing ash trays for Uncle Jimmy," she announced. "You can't help seeing what they are! One has a card on it that says: 'For a hero.'"

"Oh, damn!" said Jim.

"Jim," said his sister quickly, "I must ask you to restrain yourself before the children."

"I beg pardon," he said meekly.

"And papa has nine canes—we counted them, Bobby and I. But we decided not to tell him, and let him be all happy and surprised Christmas morning. Won't papa be pleased with nine canes?"

Jimmy sat down before a small fire in the adjoining room, and began to grin sardonically.

"There's a plant for you, mamma," said the small person, beginning to confide once more. "It came by express from somewhere in Kansas. It's dead, but it has a ribbon around it. Could I have the ribbon for pussy?"

"Yes, dear," said her mother, who had settled, without taking off her things, at a small desk. "Yes, yes—only be quiet. Now, what did I forget? I had thirteen things to do and—place cards, nut holders, candles, vanilla, Aunt Jane, Bobby— Did the butcher come, Alice?"

"I don't know, mother."

"Go ask, dear."

The small girl skipped away and returned in a moment, gasping for breath.

"He's here," she announced, "and he wonders if you want to give him a Christmas present. He left a card, a pretty card, with some stars and a dove on it— Uncle Jim, is that a dove or a chicken?"

"Buff Orpington, I should say," said her uncle, inspecting the card.

"It's a dove, Alice," said Grace severely. "Your uncle is feeling foolish. Bother that man, I suppose I'll have to go see him. Jim, have you a little change? I don't feel that a dollar is enough, considering the trips he takes here, and the number of flights we're up—thank you."

After Grace had gone, Jim sat gazing into a spluttering, small fire, feeling mean. She was a dear, and she was working powerfully hard over the whole, foolish business. He guessed it wouldn't kill him to go to the cottage for Christmas—only two days, anyway—and he would try to shine for her, only, darn it— A small voice broke his reverie.

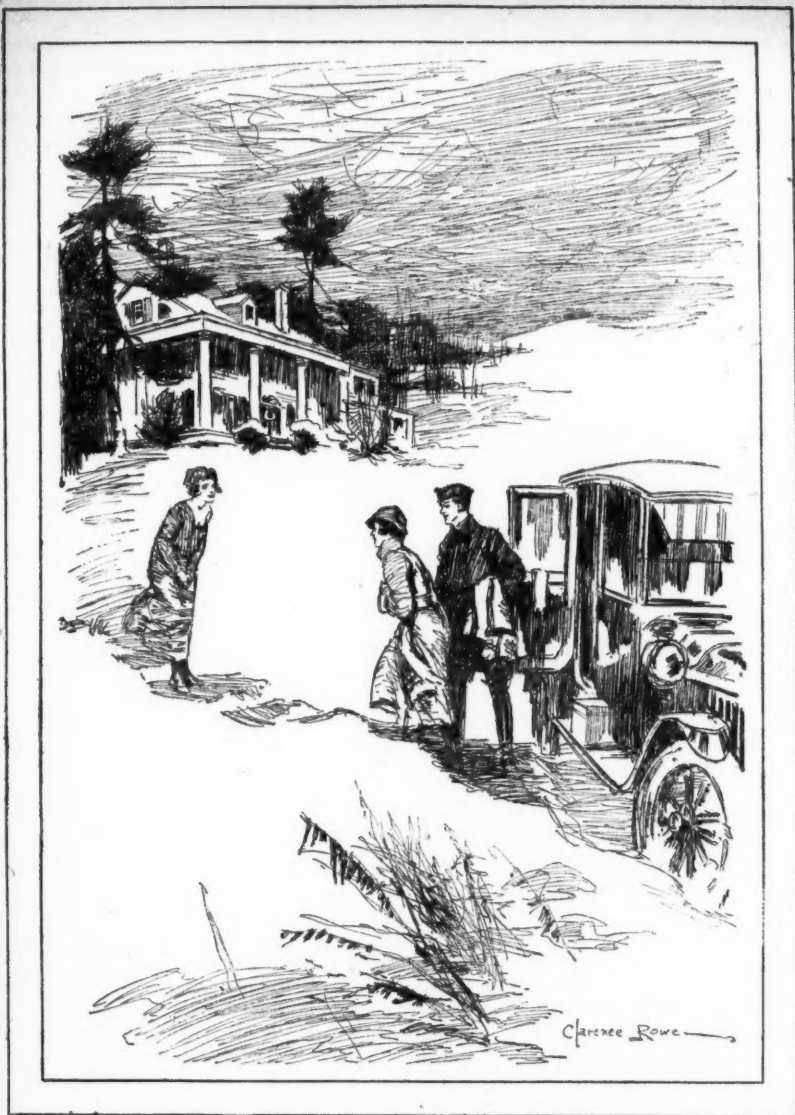
"Uncle Jim," he heard, "mother thinks you ought to marry. She told daddy she had invited just the girl for you to Beachwood. She's coming, too. They thought I wasn't listening, and I wasn't, but I couldn't help hearing. She says she will throw you together. Did you ever see mother throw? Well, she *can't*!"

"You *bet* she can't!" said Jim, sitting upright and puffing viciously on a short-stemmed pipe. "You bet she *can't*! Well, that ends it!—I hoped she was through with that particular form of da—" he looked down, recalled the presence of Alice, and added weakly, "foolishness."

"You won't tell her I told you?" murmured Alice.

"No, I won't," he answered. "You keep mum, too."

The bell rang, and the small girl



Grace stood before them, calling a welcome. "You said you wouldn't—you crazy boy! But I'm so glad! And you showed Miss Fairchild the way. Miss Fairchild, the children could hardly wait until you——"

skipped off to stand behind a black-clad maid, and peer around her skirts.

"It's something for you, Uncle Jim, and it says, 'Do not open until Christmas.' I can hardly wait! I think maybe I'll get some dolls."

"I shouldn't wonder."

"This looks like another standing ash tray—not *just* like the rest. This is a girl, painted in a bathing suit. I peeked through the paper; it was a little torn—— Oh, here's daddy!"

The next day was an unhappy one for Lieutenant James S. Simcox. His sister was superlatively polite, and utterly frosty. The subject of Christmas in the country was not broached again except when she told him he would have to dine out, as the servants refused to get dinner for one person on the twenty-fifth of December. He replied that he had intended to, anyway, and disappeared behind a newspaper, reflecting on women in general, and in no complimentary fashion. Marry? Indeed! Not if he knew it! And he rattled his paper viciously.

"I got your silly present," said his sister. "I suppose it was intended as a joke?"

"I suppose so."

"I took it as such. Did you really brave that gift shop alone to get it? I don't see how you did; some woman might have *looked* at you!"

"Rough, Grace," said Jimmy Simcox, "rough. Remember the season, and those words about peace—I'm going to have it. That's why I bid a fond adieu to the crowd after to-night. Start at six, don't you?"

"Yes. I only wish, Jim, you could meet a girl I've asked down there. She is most attractive; her ideas are so in accord with yours——"

"Don't want to meet her."

"Gallant of you, Jim—and she's *frightfully* lonely!"

"She won't be, if she trains with your crowd. No one can be, worse luck!"

Grace arose.

"Well, I wish you a Merry Christmas," she said frostily. "I suppose I shan't see you again. I have to do some last shopping, and I'm going to meet them all at the train. I'm sorry, Jim, that you feel as you do."

"Oh, Grace——"

"I do love you," she added.

"You make me feel a brute," he said.

"Men are—— I suppose being separated on Christmas means nothing to you. It does to me, but—good-by."

"Good-by," he responded in a shamed way, and again picked up his paper. But he found no news that would absorb him. She had succeeded, he acknowledged with bitterness, in making him utterly miserable, utterly so. He threw down his paper, hunted his cap, and went out to get his dinner, which—as he looked around him at various gay parties—did seem a little lonely.

The morning of December twenty-fifth was clear and frosty and without the proper snow. Lieutenant Jimmy slept until nine, and then awoke wondering where he was, in that unrooted fashion that comes after a deep sleep. He yawned, turned over, thought of the day, and of the long, slender present he had promised his sister not to open before Christmas, and got up. After some splashing in the bathroom and his usual difficulty in getting into his clothes—he was not entirely used to his stiff leg—he went to the dining room. A canary chirped in the living room, but otherwise things were very quiet, the usual street rumble being almost entirely absent.

Around Jimmy Simcox's place, on the table, were packages of all sizes; on the floor was a chorus of standing ash trays.

"I had orders for to put 'em like that," said Annie, of very pink cheeks, who entered with the cereal.

"Could you use one of them?" inquired Jimmy, pointing to a gorgeous,

painted wood butler, who held a glass ash tray.

"My young man is a good Methodist; he don't smoke," admitted Annie. "But maybe I could use it to hang a hat on. I thank yuh."

Then she backed through a swinging door, carrying one of the nine ash trays intended for a "hero."

After that, he opened a package which held a pin cushion from his niece; several which held ties he would rather die than wear; a promisingly shaped box which really did hold the sort of cigarettes he liked, from his brother-in-law; and then he slipped the new umbrella from its long box. On the handle was a note. He read:

MY DEAR JIM: I hope you're going to have a pleasant day. Of course I wanted you with us, but we'll forget that. You would have liked the girl I asked especially for you. I know it! She is so charming in all ways!

Please hunt up some sort of a card for Mrs. Grant and send it to her for me. Make the message affectionate. Don't forget.

Have a happy day. Your loving

GRACE.

He smiled at the note; he could see the sort of girl who was "charming in all ways." No doubt she had sufficient money for her comfort, and an established position. Jimmy congratulated himself that love did not make his vision opaque, and he felt that he knew his sister. But, after all, she was a dear and had been good—no end good—to him, always! He wondered what they were all doing, and whether Bobby liked his steam engine; and, quite suddenly, he decided to take the ten o'clock to Beachwood; he'd reach there at noon. He didn't like crowds, and as for that girl—well, he simply wouldn't stand for that! But the idea of hurting Grace—on Christmas! The day had done its softening work. He hurried out of the house, and then to a club and station and a train.

A grinning porter muttered some-

thing concerning Christmas; the conductor loosed, for a moment, his grim clutch on dignity; and Jimmy found himself inside the train, and seated across the car from a pretty girl who had evidently been on board for several minutes. She was settled behind "Fox in the Trenches," by Private Fox. This fact enraged Jimmy. Back of him sat an old lady and her wheezing little poodle, unsuccessfully camouflaged in a basket. The old lady was munching biscuits, and calling her poodle "sweetie." Jimmy reached for his paper; there was a hiss of air, one more passenger, and then the train started. A half hour passed.

"Pardon," said the old lady, leaning forward and shoving a folding drinking cup at Jimmy, "but would you get me a drink? I dislike to disturb the porter for so little a thing—you know they don't like dogs."

Jim, slightly amused, took the cup and started down the car. With a little difficulty, he got the drink—it takes some years to learn to be graceful, though lame—and started back. The train swayed mightily as he reached the pretty girl's seat, and he paused—and just then the drinking cup decided to fold up.

"Oh, by jingo!" said Lieutenant Jimmy Simcox, looking down at the girl's dripping skirt.

"It doesn't matter," she answered, smiling up at him. "A little more dampness doesn't make any difference."

And then he saw that her lashes were wet.

"Oh, I say," he remonstrated sympathetically, "that's all wrong; you know it's *Christmas!*"

"That's the reason I'm crying," she answered. "Because it *is* Christmas."

Somehow—Lieutenant Jimmy never knew quite how—the old lady was watered, and he was sitting opposite the pretty girl. But this astounding thing did happen without any consciousness

on his part. He only felt her great charm, the fact that he was at home and natural in talking with her, and that being with her was all of a piece with the day and all that the day stood for. Then he heard himself asking her bluntly, bravely, what was wrong.

In answer, she smiled. "Do you really want to know?" she said, after a few seconds. "Well——" and she reached for a suit case. She opened it and drew forth a tissue-covered package.

"Here," she said, pushing back the paper, "is my only Christmas present!"

"By jingo!" said Jimmy Simcox. He found himself facing the work-basket his sister had said would give her hysterics; the basket he had braved the gift shop to get, hoping the little touch of humor in the offering would smooth his path to her forgiveness.

"Yes," said the girl, "that spells December twenty-fifth. I am miserable! I wish that once in my life I could have a hectic, overworked, crowded Christmastime, and be kept busy two weeks after it, writing notes of thanks for things I never could use!"

"Will you tell me," said Jimmy, "why you don't get Christmas presents? I should think you would get—lots."

"It is a long story," said the girl. "It begins with my mother, who died when I was born—and then my being sent away to be reared by an aunt in Paris, who kept me rather segregated. I haven't any friends. I came back here a little while ago to teach French. My aunt died. My father was Colonel Fairchild of Anne Arundel County, Maryland. Perhaps you know the family?"

"I don't know many Southerners," said Jimmy, looking intently at the girl before him. "But you know that's tough! I'm mighty sorry!"

"Oh, it is nothing," she answered. "I ought to be ashamed to be so childish! To-day, I am going down to the

country for a party—I teach the little Dean children, Alice and Bobby. Perhaps you know them?"

"Slightly," faltered Jim. What in the world had possessed Grace to give the lovely creature before him that disgusting basket! He'd see to it that she got something to make up—he could telegraph for some candy and flowers. It was *unthinkable!* He felt the rising of an almost wild rage.

"Well, I am to care for them a little, I think, and to come in for the edges of the festivity," she explained. "It was really dear of Mrs. Dean to ask me. She is kind and good, isn't she?"

"I'm very fond of her," said Jimmy, still staring at the girl before him.

"Do you know them well?" asked the girl nervously.

"Not very—no," answered Jimmy; and after he spoke, he wondered what she had asked him. Somehow, everything in the world was upside down. All his senses had run amuck; his hearing was dulled by his swallowing, which was, to him, as loud as many a cannon he had heard at the front.

"You have been in France?" she asked, looking at his bronzed face, and seeing in his eyes the noise-weary, old look which comes from the loud noise of guns, and the soft rustle of death.

"Rather," he answered. Then, looking down at his stiff leg, he went on: "It was worth it—losing my chances for tennis, golf, dancing, and those things a chap thinks he likes most awfully—worth it! It was so big. But now—that the more active part is over—I can't talk of it. People are so *light* about it. They say: 'How horrible! Do tell us about it! How did you feel when you lay in that shell hole for so long?' They want it to go with tea and little cakes. They feel as if it is over, entirely over. It isn't! It lies as a living thing in the soul of every man who truly felt it; and it lies on the surface of the country where the play was

acted, and it is mirrored in the souls of that country's people. No French woman would say: 'How simply ghastly! Do tell us some more! Is it true that the Germans tangled wounded men up in balls of barbed wire? Some one said so, but you can't believe stories.' And then"—Jimmy Simcox faltered—"the average American woman will look across the room and end her inquiries with: 'Oh, there's Agnes Chappel! I haven't seen her for months!' It's all so casual. When people realize this—realize that there are some of us whose spirits must wear mourning—then it will be easier to start again in the normal living. The world is a different place! They must realize it!"

The girl before him nodded. Her eyes, wide opened, were on his.

"I feel that way, too," she said. "I have for months past. The chatter is like talk of a musical comedy at a funeral. It doesn't hurt the world's chance for a new life, but it bothers those relatives—who feel the loss most deeply. What a *new* place this world is going to be! How many changes!"

Jimmy Simcox nodded. He was experiencing some himself, some vital, large and astounding changes. He had never been able to corral into words his feelings about war chatter. He had never been able to explain it to his disappointed sister—a sister who longed to exhibit him, and did her best with proddings and figurative raw meats. This girl made him talk. She was beautiful inside as well as out. He felt this, as well as a good number of other things he had heretofore regarded as "all rot!"

And he talked on for an hour. He told her how he was made lame; told it graphically, wonderfully; and when he finished she put out a small hand, laid it on his, and said very simply, "I hope you are proud."

"Why should I be?" he asked. "It

was the only thing to do." And then he said, with quite an embarrassed, rough slant to his voice: "Hope you don't think I'm a conceited fool. I don't know why I told you that."

"I understand you," she said; and he knew she did.

Then they were silent. She looked out of the window and wondered how Christmas had ever seemed anything but gloriously beautiful; and he—he looked down at the spot on his hand where hers had lain. To all outward appearances, it was quite the same; but it did not *feel* so.

After a moment or so, he looked at her, and then out of the window.

"We're almost there," he said dismally.

He was hoping that he'd have a chance to talk with her *alone*—the crowds at the house were always frightfully energetic about games. He broke the silence.

"I've never told that story to any one else," he said. "I hope I didn't bore you."

"Why," she said simply, "you know you didn't."

Then she slipped into her wrap; and he wondered, as he held it, whether it wasn't pretty light—and decided it *was*. He would see to it, for one thing, that she wore heavier clothes—and had lots of Christmas fuss—but didn't get tired; he wouldn't have that! He had arranged his taking care of her—that *must* be!

The train stopped jerkily and they got out. A closed motor waited by the station platform. He helped her into it, and followed. She grew very silent, and her eyes became unhappy. He, looking down at her, wondered a little; he was making so many and such astounding discoveries!

"Here we are," he said, after the motor had swung around a curve, and began to go up a fir-lined driveway. "Ever been here? Nice place."



"I never did anything so entirely odious before! I am mortified, ashamed, as I should be, and I wish you could—could forget it."

"No," she answered softly.

And then Grace stood before them, calling a welcome.

"You said you wouldn't—you crazy boy! But I'm so glad! And you showed Miss Fairchild the way. Miss Fairchild, the children could hardly wait until you—— We decided to telephone you, and insist on your coming, Jim—not like Christmas without you. I'm so glad——"

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Laughing and talking, they followed her into a house bursting with Christmas—dinner smells, holly, a silvery-gold, shiny tree, and laughing, happy people. Youngsters were eating candy, unrebuked; men, winding mechanical trains; women, inspecting dolls. There was a chorus of greeting, and in the excitement little Miss Fairchild disappeared. After a half hour of her absence, Jim made a rude break away

from the crowd, and began his search. But he did not find her, and then, before another half hour had passed, the dinner bell rang.

Miss Fairchild sat well down the table, next to one of Henry's cousins, an arrangement which Jim considered idiotic. He hoped that the fellow wasn't boring her, and then he began to hope that he was. Now and again he heard her voice, and at those times his replies to any questions would have made him a fascinating subject for an alienist.

After dinner, every one played the simplest games. Soon it was four-thirty; the dark was beginning to come. Jimmy was forced into a game of billiards, and when he returned she was gone again. He searched diligently and at last found her, sitting before the library fire, with Alice at her feet, putting a new dress on a bedraggled doll.

Miss Fairchild looked up at Lieutenant Simcox, and grew pink.

"Will you sit for a moment?" she asked timidly. "I would like to speak to you."

"I'd like you to," he answered, thinking she made the prettiest firelit picture he had ever seen; and he settled with his niece at Miss Fairchild's feet.

"Mother doesn't like us to use those cushions on the floor," admonished Alice.

"Christmas," said her uncle absently.

Alice nodded, feeling that anything was permissible. Then she yawned, wiggled herself up on the knee of her dearly loved instructor, and her eyes closed wearily.

"That's good," said Angela Fairchild, looking down. "I—I have something to say to you that I don't want her to hear. It is about that basket, the basket I showed you this morning. Your sister gave it to me. It was sweet of her—I really love it—I don't know why I had to speak of it in that way. I never

did anything so entirely odious before! I am mortified, ashamed, as I should be, and I wish you could—could forget it."

"Any needles in it?" asked Jimmy, smiling.

"I'm sure I don't know. There were lots of useful and lovely things, even if there weren't needles," she answered.

Jimmy smiled even more broadly.

"Some day," he said, "when we know each other better, I'll tell you a story—but not now. I suppose you'd be glad if I didn't give you away?"

"I don't think I understand. I am very stupid."

"You'd be glad if I didn't tell on you?"

"But you wouldn't!" she said. "It would not be fair. I *was* mean, but that would be a punishment too great!"

"I might tell," said Jimmy. And then he reached up and bravely covered her hand with his. "Oh, what's the use?" he said. "They say it happens only in books, but it happens, sometimes, in real life. It's happened! I care for you! You're lonely—there's no one else, is there?"

She shook her head, her eyes suddenly taking on a frightened expression.

"Well," Jimmy went on, "if you'll say you'll try to give me the biggest Christmas present I could ever have—try to just as hard as you can—I won't tell; otherwise, I will!"

Miss Fairchild gasped.

"What's your name?" asked Jimmy. "First name?"

"Angela," she whispered.

"Well, Angela," began Jimmy bravely, and then he lost his wonderful, newly found nerve. "I'm a dub," he said, taking his hand away. "I suppose you couldn't—" He looked into the flames, thinking what a fool he'd been, and what a mess he had made of it. He wondered if he had spoiled all his chances to get what, he knew surely, should be his, and what he would al-

ways want. At last he looked up, because the silence had grown long. Miss Angela Fairchild was weeping!

"Oh, darling——" said the man who hated women.

"I don't cry very often," she said, and then giggled, and caught her breath after her absurd, small-girl laugh. "That sounds so silly," she explained, "when I began the day with it, and now am doing it again. But I don't. It is only when great things happen. All my life I have been lonely. I have realized how lonely ever since this morning. It seems absurd, but I *know* that I care—and I have known you only a day!"

Jimmy did not speak, and she misunderstood his breathless silence.

"You weren't joking?" she whispered, her face growing colorless.

Jimmy Simcox laughed, none too steadily, and struggled to his feet.

"Joking?" he echoed. "Joking? Not *exactly!*" And he leaned down, captured her hand, kissed it gently, and then her lips. "Now do you think I was joking?" he asked, after several bewilderingly beautiful seconds.

The memory of his talk on the train came back, and again she felt all the hidden depths of him. His touch, made gentle for her, strengthened her new feeling, making it beautifully strong by a wall of trust.

"No," she whispered, "I do not."

Late that night Jimmy's sister came to his room, bearing extra blankets.

"Frightfully cold," she said, as she dumped them on the bed, "and getting worse every minute. I hope you have heavy pajamas." She hesitated, wandered over to stand before the fireplace, and then spoke with elaborate carelessness. "You liked Miss Fairchild?" she questioned.

Jim shook his head, and then he spoke loudly. "Oh, *no!*" he said, drawing a deep breath after the words.

Grace drew near and slipped an arm through his.

"How did Miss Fairchild happen to get the basket I gave you?" asked Jim. "I hope you realize that it set me back four bucks!"

"Oh, Jim," she answered, "I *am* so ashamed! But the fact was I forgot Aunt Nancy, and she is *so* important, and I wouldn't wound her for anything—so I took what I had for Angela and gave it to her. Then I had nothing for Angela and I thought of the basket. I *am* ashamed!"

"You should be," said her brother severely.

Grace kissed him, spoke of more cover, and turned away. As she reached the door, he spoke.

"Say, Grace," he said.

"Well?"

"Where was the girl you wanted me to meet? The one you thought I'd fall for immediately. Likely, wasn't it? I might as well tell you that Alice gave away the show. I didn't see her. Did she back out?"

"Didn't see her?" said Grace. "Didn't see her? No one thinks you've seen anything else! You brought her down on the train, Jim, and—my anxieties about her loneliness are vanishing. Good night!"

"Wait," ordered Lieutenant Jimmy Simcox with a gasp. Grace paused. He went over to her and put his hand on her shoulder.

"Do you know," he said, "I thought you were—well, more for show! I supposed the girl would be—not my kind. Understanding you is *almost* the best thing of this day! Grace, I've been a fool!"





WHAT THE STARS SAY

by Madame Renée Longuille

Would you know yourself—your character, your disposition, your traits, your lucky days? Would you know some of the things that are likely to happen to you in the future? If so, you will be interested in following each month Madame Longuille's articles on Astrology. The series began in the March number, with the sign of Aquarius.

SAGITTARIUS

BETWEEN November 22d and December 20th of any year, the sun passes through the constellation or group of stars known as Sagittarius, the Archer or hunter, a fiery, double-bodied, mutable sign. The planet Jupiter is its ruler. Very often, people born at this time possess well-formed, strong bodies. Their faces are rather long and often handsome, sometimes with straight Grecian noses. They possess very good complexions of rather ruddy hue, and clear, expressive eyes. With hopeful, bright, intuitive dispositions, they are invariably looking to the future for "better things" to happen. No other sign of the Zodiac gives such extreme self-confidence as does this one. The persons often appear reckless and daring, and again sensitive, intuitive, and timid. This being a dual sign, its natives are hard to gauge, as their characters at times seem more or less contradictory. They are active, enterprising, and possess a peculiar gift for being able to communicate their thoughts to other people at any distance. They make wonderful students of mental telepathy, even if they give very little time or thought to the science. These people are very unhappy under

any personal restraint. They do not fight for liberty, however, but become irritable and peevish. They are not as willing to give others the much-desired freedom, but try to rule in detail the lives of those with whom they come in contact. Knowing by a kind of sixth sense the weak points in their friends' and relatives' natures, they do not hesitate often to strike where it will hurt most, a thing Sagittarians are very clever in accomplishing. Yet they would not stand by and see these same people abused in any way by another. They are indignant at any harshness shown, and feel it almost a personal injury.

Their two-sided dispositions often cause them to be petulant and nervous. This is because each side of the nature is trying to rule at the same time and the result is a conflict within them. Their manners are often sweet, gentle, and easy until in contact with an enemy. Then the Sagittarian can become very cold, harsh, and matter-of-fact.

These natives are often heard to deplore their lack of money and to complain of their financial difficulties, but it can be truly said that one rarely finds a Sagittarian without a little "nest egg"

securely tucked away, and no one but himself the wiser. According to station in life, the amount will vary, of course. However, Sagittarians are also prudent and economical for others, and help greatly to check their spendthrift friends. They are really honest at heart but, strange to say, are always being judged the opposite. They trust no one absolutely, not even themselves, and are always on the lookout for deceptions. They concentrate on acquiring riches and often are successful. Their natures, while changeable and quick, are really sympathetic, and they often delight in demonstrating their affections. Dumb animals, especially horses, are greatly loved and tenderly cared for by these natives. They should remember their early morning dreams, and notice how significant they are of happenings of the following day.

Whatever the failings of these people may be, it can be said that they do not wish to waste one's time, money, or energy by seemingly aimless talking. They state their business in a straight, firm manner and, at times, this quality may be misinterpreted as bluntness. They dislike work that drags along and are very impatient of delays or unnecessary intrusions. They are not subtle or particularly tactful in any discussions, but with an abrupt idea expressed, they consider the argument closed without any reasons given.

Another characteristic peculiar to the pure types of Sagittarius is their sense of direction. They are at home in the woods without a compass, and equally so in a strange city. They are unusually clever in finding their way about and are not easily lost, unless they become worried or nervous. The undeveloped types are often thought to be disagreeable people on account of their outspoken, blunt remarks which often offend or hurt. They lack the ability to acquire even an appearance of diplomacy. They allow no one to hinder

them in any way, once they have their minds set on a goal, and they are rebellious and ill-tempered if one tries to interfere.

DECANATES.

This sign, like all others, may be divided into three decanates or types, each accentuating or subduing the general qualities of the whole sign. This enables us to get a little nearer the individual characters. Those born between November 21st and the end of the month come under the influence of the first decanate. They are not greatly favored and have the qualities of bluntness exaggerated. They are beyond the control of any one, and are not willing to listen to advice or submit to the least restriction. However, they are very careful of detail, even too much so for the comfort of those about them. Their insistence on independence often causes them to seem haughty and indifferent.

Those born in the second division, or between December 1st and 10th, are better favored. Their minds turn toward religious and scientific studies, and they strive to lead pure, good lives. Their temperaments are gloomy, however, and they often indulge in fits of jealousy and anger. They are easily impressed. They delight in starting arguments, even if they do not take any part.

The last decanate is from the 10th to the 20th of December. Those coming under this influence often possess really bad tempers, are stubborn, and hard to please. But they possess a redeeming feature in a keen, active, versatile mind. The quarrelsome traits of the sign are accentuated in this decanate of Sagittarius.

EMPLOYMENT.

Although this is a double-bodied sign and the natives may wish to do several kinds of work at the same time, they readily become mixed up or confused. They are, however, constant, diligent

workers when they have a definite goal in view. "Beating about the bush" is most irritating to these people, whose nature it is to be as straightforward and swift as the archers' arrow would signify. Thus they make successful military men, and also succeed as lawyers, teachers, breeders of horses, or trainers of animals. Any work is congenial that brings them into contact with other people and yet is not too heavy or confusing. They think a great deal of money and usually acquire something worth while. They are always thoughtful of the "rainy day" coming, though not morbidly so, and are usually prepared for it. Their abilities are not scattered as in persons of other double-bodied signs, but are definitely centered on any undertaking in which they happen to be engaged. Though often thought to be disagreeable, they have a happy, easy, diplomatic disposition in their business and in meeting strangers, if everything goes their way.

CHILDREN.

Children born under this sign are very apt to have rather fiery temperaments. They are difficult little characters to understand, as their dual natures are often in conflict. They become irritable and unruly with those of whom they are not afraid. A strange teacher or guardian can do most in disciplining these children, as they stand a bit in awe of strangers and at first seem even timid and bashful.

One peculiar physical characteristic of the Sagittarian children is that they so frequently have beautiful eyes, full of expression, and often with a little sparkling, whimsical look. They are very ambitious and show certain wonderful mental qualities. In fact, they can master many subjects, not so much by a quick wit as by a persistent, determined effort to finish what they start.

They get on well with other children

and have many friends, despite the fact that they want their own way in almost everything. They can be ruled much better through affection and sympathy than through harsh words and punishment. Although their seemingly timid and quiet natures will stand a lot of adverse criticism and abuse, they can show surprising daring and much fight when pushed to the wall. Pets, especially dogs and ponies, are a source of great pleasure to them. They seem able to convey their thoughts to the animals and can train them easily.

FRIENDS, LOVE, AND MARRIAGE.

It is always best to keep Sagittarians as friends, for, as enemies, they are bitter, revengeful, and determined. After great persuasion and an appeal to their sympathies, they may forgive, but they never forget. Although these natives are generally happy and fortunate in marriage, an uncongenial union is particularly difficult for them to endure. This applies mostly to those born in the last two decanates. Those born in the first division of this sign rarely enjoy happy wedded life. Should they happen to marry well, some crushing disaster or calamity is almost sure to spoil their lives. They make honest, sincere husbands and wives and are very true to the marriage vow, but at times are rather difficult to live with. They are capable of being very severe and cruel to those whom they love most.

To find the most happiness in life, the Sagittarians should choose those born with the Sun in Aries between March 21st and April 20th. But congenial companions and friends are also found among those with the Sun in Libra, September 22d to October 22d, or Virgo, August 22d to September 21st. Should a person's map of birth show the Moon to be situated in either Sagittarius, Leo, Aquarius, or Libra,

then these natives with the Sun in Sagittarius need fear no great unhappiness from choosing such types as friends or as partners in marriage or business.

HEALTH AND DISEASE.

As a rule, natives of this sign have very good constitutions and usually enjoy fairly good health, but if the Sun is at all afflicted by certain planets, there will be a strong tendency to lung troubles and consumption. This disease, to which the Sagittarians are particularly susceptible, may start from a seemingly innocent bronchial or throat affliction, which is almost sure to develop into something more serious the moment their vitality is the least depleted by worry, or by too strenuous application to their undertakings. There is a great inclination in Sagittarians to forget that they are not machines and cannot be driven constantly without rest and quiet. Therefore, if they are aware of this failing, they can guard themselves and try to practice moderation in every way and so overcome partly their unusual susceptibility to disease. They are fond of outdoor exercise, which will prove very beneficial and will help to keep their systems in order, if indulged in temperately. There is no excuse for their not storing up a wealth of vitality, because they are not afflicted, as so many other signs are, with sleeplessness. When the Sagittarians go to rest, they sleep profoundly.

Sudden disasters to health and body seem to befall these natives oftener than those in many signs. Moderation in everything they do will tend to lessen their liability to accidents and also give them more resistance. After diseases they do not recuperate as readily as might be expected of those who are blessed with their good constitutions. When they reach the age of thirty or thereabouts, they should be very cautious, because they are then in great danger of sickness or some unusual

disaster. However, through all illnesses and misfortunes, they generally live to a ripe old age and succeed in doing much good and really useful work in the world.

PREDICTIONS.

It very often happens that the natives of this sign are unhappy and unfortunate in the first half of their lives, owing to the poverty of their parents, who may not be able to help in the ambitions of these energetic people. Then again, the unhappiness may be on account of the premature death or sickness of the father. They will always be on good terms with their families, but their brothers, if they have any, will not be of any great help and may even be a source of trouble at times. There are indications of family secrets, which will somewhat estrange the subject from his kin, or relatives-in-law may be the cause of the trouble. This double-bodied sign foretells two marriages, one of which, at least, may bring great cause for regret. There will be few if any children born to Sagittarians, and they may be estranged and feel no sympathy for their parents. Many friends are predicted, among them one of very high standing, who will help at a very serious time in the subject's career. It is well for these natives to be on their guard against secret enemies.

They should never take sea voyages, because misfortune and unhappiness is very apt to result. After long, eventful, but very useful lives, the Sagittarians are likely to meet death far from their homes or places of birth.

Answers to Correspondents.

J. C. L., Born December 19, 1898, at Toronto, Canada.—Virgo was on the eastern horizon at the time of your birth, making Mercury the ruler of your life. This planet is situated in the house of lands and agriculture, well aspected by Jupiter from the house of money. This denotes good and sound judgment and a steadfast, sober disposition. You will always be helped out of

trouble, and I believe will have a good deal of money during the latter half of life. The Sun is situated in the fourth house in evil aspect to Neptune in midheaven, and the Moon in the house of marriage. This position may derange the health and cause you much disturbance of mind through some one of genius. You may be artistic along some line, but find it difficult to develop. There are indications of more than one marriage, of even more than two. The aspects and position of Venus show you to be fond of and interested in some science. You would do well and make money along some line of art or science, as a printer, engraver, or artificer. Uranus and Venus in conjunction warns you of a very strong attachment formed after marriage with a single young man who is a neighbor, or one met on a short journey. I cannot promise any great happiness in marriage, and, although you are fond of home and home surroundings, many removals will occur during life. You may have some distressing secret, caused by relatives-in-law.

The fiery Mars, poised in your house of friends, hopes and wishes, warns you to beware of false and malicious friends, who will be constantly wanting to borrow money. Let your good judgment in money matters help you here. Give what you wish, but never expect to have borrowed money returned. Saturn is in the fourth house, and threatens ill health or early death for your father. This position may also cause you to suffer from sciatica, hip disease, or broken bones. Much of the evil of this chart is overcome by the benefic position of Jupiter, and the promise of a goodly supply of money.

F. S. K. S., Born December 7, 1898, at North Grafton, Massachusetts.—At this hour, the watery sign Pisces was rising, causing Neptune to influence your life. The Sun was in conjunction with Saturn near midheaven. From these aspects and a few more, I would judge you to be of a dual nature. At some time you may, through poor judgment, lose your home, or land surrounding your home. Saturn in midheaven will derange your health, making you liable to consumption, coughs, and colds. Mars threatens your health, or causes an operation, after which you will gain in health and happiness.

Mercury helps you very much in employment and gives you a quick, pregnant wit, and perhaps some original talents. Sudden important journeyings to distant lands are shown, which will prove fortunate, even if accompanied by hard and dangerous work.

The position of Uranus might cause you to become interested in occult science or to be very independent in your religion. There is not much of importance happening around you now, but when you are about twenty-three, the Moon comes into opposition to Mars and square to Jupiter. At this period you should guard your health, which may give you much concern and prove rather expensive. You will be helped at this time by a friend or new acquaintance of rather an eccentric turn of mind. If you are now secretly worried by your work or some happenings around your home, it may be a consolation to know that this cannot last long, and can be overcome by correct thinking and your natural good judgment. Neptune and Mercury in opposition cause this last disturbance.

If you were born between December 21st and January 22nd of any year, you belong in the sign of Capricornus. Your case will be treated in next month's issue.



Our grandchildren will go skylarking in airplanes.

Married women would be happier if their ministers, instead of warning them against frivolity, advised them to retain an interest in curl papers and love stories.

Men worry because they can't understand their wives, when in fact they don't understand themselves.

At *the* Office Door

A Little Sketch

By Hildegard Lavender



WHILE I waited, my heart kept pounding, pounding. It was an ugly gray street, just as Gerald had always told me it was—big granite loft buildings elbowing funny little dingy tenements left over from the old days when this had been a run-down residential district, and one or two old-fashioned real houses, little brick houses from an earlier time yet, with stoops where people might sit in the evening and dormer windows in the attics; but mostly, as Gerald had said, great, gaunt piles of ugliness.

It wasn't the ugliness of it that made my heart pound, of course. It wasn't even that I had driven my shining, new, gay little car all the way in from Rosebank alone. Perhaps, though, that had a little to do with it. I suppose I was nervous. Traffic is awful! And Gerald's office is so far downtown—away down, nearly to Washington Square, where the streets twist and twine and lose themselves and come to life again as they please. But I hadn't had any trouble. Of course, I had taken lots of lessons in traffic driving. So it wasn't nervousness about the car that made me feel hot and tense, and made me hear the blood throbbing in my ears.

It was because it was the first time since we were married that I had done anything all by myself. I had told Gerald everything, planned everything with him, let him decide everything. And he had decided that I mustn't think of running a car alone.

"Kitten," he always said—he calls

me "Kitten," and I have liked it—"I shouldn't have a moment's peace if I thought of you careening around over the country with a gasoline engine ready to blow up in front of you."

And when I said to him that his sister Margaret ran a car, and ran it very well, and that even his mother could manage her own electric, he said that that was different, that not even for a sister or a mother did a man worry as for his own little kitten-katten. And did I want my pretty little strawberry finger tips and my dear little lilies of hands—that is what he said—all grease and bruises and burns and scratches? And didn't I like his driving? Wasn't he a good-enough chauffeur? I didn't like to remind him how much of the time he was away, and with the car, too; for in fine weather he almost always uses it to go into town.

But when dad gave me that nice, fat check for a birthday present, I couldn't resist. So I bought a little car, all my own—a runabout. And for a whole month I took a lesson every day. I kept it at the garage in Rosedale Heights, where the people wouldn't be so likely to see Gerald and say "So your wife's learning to run a car?" I wanted to surprise him.

But to-day, while I waited to surprise him, I was frightened. Perhaps he'd be angry because I had disregarded his wishes. Perhaps he'd be angry because I had kept something hidden from him. Gerald had never been really angry with me in all the months—fifteen of them now—since we had been married.

I began to wish I hadn't tried to surprise him. I half thought I would go back home. And then I called myself a silly little coward and I pulled myself together and waited.

At five o'clock, people began streaming through the big revolving door. Girls mostly. How young they seemed, many of them! Little things, dressed in flashy clothes sometimes, sometimes in drab ones. Some of them had painted cheeks and lips. They weren't all from Gerald's office, of course. It is a loft building, with many floors, many offices. Somehow I had never thought before how many, many girls there are in offices, pretty—young—

By and by some young men came out, too. Sometimes they walked along by themselves, sometimes they walked with the girls. There was a great deal of laughing. The gray, dingy street seemed to come alive, and almost to blossom, with all that sparkle of eyes and that flash of teeth and color of hats and sound of voices—slangy and impudent and funny. Somehow, I had never thought before how there is probably a great deal of fun about working in an office—girls and boys together, men and women.

By that time, my heart had stopped pounding, and my cheeks weren't hot any longer. I wished I hadn't come. I wished I had told Gerald about my little toy car.

A truck came along, and I had to back away from the entrance a little to make room for it to unload. But I could still watch the stream flowing out through the revolving door. I could call to Gerald when he came—that is, if he came. It was silly of me not to have made sure he was in his office that afternoon before I came away downtown. But I had wanted to surprise him.

And while I wondered if I hadn't better, after all, send word up to his

place that I was waiting outside, a girl came out—very dark, Italian or Jewish, I think—vivid as a red rose on that dull street, bold, competent, gay-looking.

It's funny how completely one sees some things. I could paint her picture now from memory—her terra-cotta-colored toque and her sleek sloe-black hair under it, her eyes that flashed, and her red lips that laughed—all of her, down to her teetering heels and her ankles covered with gauzy silk. I never saw any one so clearly before in my life, and yet I only saw her for a minute, while she waited outside the door for some one to follow her. She looked back to see what detained him, and then bantered with a boy loitering near the curb, while she waited.

Then the door swung again, and Gerald came out, and they walked off together. They did not look toward the bright little new car standing back of the truck.

I drove back to Rosebank very slowly. I was glad I had the car. I had to think about it, and about the driving. I couldn't let myself remember the color of her eyes under her toque. I couldn't let myself remember Gerald's shoulders, as he walked away from me. If I had stopped thinking about the little car, I might have had an accident. Just a second's carelessness, and then — But having the little car, and having to drive it, I couldn't remember anything else.

When I got in, my maid said Gerald had telephoned.

So much life, so much color, in those offices. I never thought of it until today. Girls and boys, men and women—youth, sex, fun, adventure.

I always used to be sorry for them, the girls who had to work.

I think, perhaps I shall sell my little car.

It would spoil my hands.



Simon

By J. Storer Clouston

Author of "The Man from the Clouds," "The Spy in Black," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. VAN BUREN

If you like a mystery that is a mystery, you will want to read this new serial. The story is so subtly woven that not the most discerning will anticipate its dénouement.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Simon Rattar, a judicial official of a Scottish county, is a man of few words and precise habits. On a certain morning he acts in a precise manner wholly foreign to him. His housemaid, Mary MacLean, notices his strange look, and is concerned. Hesitatingly she tells him that, on the night before, a strange man was prowling on the grounds. The master takes this news quietly, and bids her say nothing of it. At the office, Mr. Rattar's clerk notices his changed manner. In conference at different times of the morning with Mr. Malcolm Cromarty, Mr. Ned Cromarty, of Stanesland, and Miss Cicely Farmond, all related to his chief client, Sir Reginald Cromarty, Simon displays marked reticence. He asks each to review his dealings with him, thereby to freshen his memory. At night, Mary MacLean is disturbed by strange noises in the house. Several days later, the death, in New York, of Simon's brother George is announced in the local paper. George, the family scapegrace, had once been Simon's partner, but had committed forgery, and escaped to America. Notice of the loss of Simon's signet ring also appears. In Sir Reginald's household, he and his wife, his financially embarrassed author-nephew, Malcolm, and Cicely Farmond, his brother's illegitimate daughter, make up the family circle. One night, Sir Reginald sits up late to read. In the morning he is found murdered, by Bisset, the butler.

CHAPTER XII.

CICELY.

NED CROMARTY waited in the hall while Bisset went to the door with the procurator fiscal and the superintendent of police. As he stood there in the darkened silence of the house, there came to his ears for an instant the faint sound of a voice, and it seemed to be a woman's. With that the current of his thoughts seemed to change, and when Bisset returned he asked, though with marked hesitation:

"Do you think, Bisset, I could do

anything for any of them, Mr. Malcolm Cromarty, or—er—Miss Farmond?"

Bisset considered the point judicially. It was clear he felt that the management of the household was in his hands now.

"I am sure Miss Farmond would be pleased, sir—poor young lady!"

"Do you really think so?" said Ned, and his manner brightened visibly. "Well, if she won't mind——"

"I think if you come this way, sir, you will find her with Sir Malcolm."

"Sir Malcolm!" exclaimed Ned. "My God, so he is!"

"Simon" began last month—in the December number.

To himself he added:

"And she will soon be Lady Cromarty!"

But the thought did not seem to exhilarate him.

He was led toward the billiard room, an addition to the house which lay rather apart. The door was half open and through it he could see that the blinds had been drawn down, and he could hear a murmur of voices.

"They are in there, sir," said Biset, and he left him.

As Ned Cromarty entered, he caught the words, spoken by the new baronet:

"My dear Cicely, I depend on your sympathy——"

He broke off as he heard a footstep, and seemed to move a little apart from the chair where Cicely was sitting.

The two young people greeted their visitor; Cicely, in a voice so low that it was scarcely audible, but with a smile that seemed, he thought, to welcome him; Sir Malcolm, with a tragic solemnity which no doubt was quite appropriate to a bereaved baronet. The appearance of a third party seemed, however, to afford him no particular gratification, and after exchanging a sentence or two, he begged, in a very serious tone, to be excused, and retired, walking softly and mournfully. Ned noticed then, that his face was extraordinarily pale and his eye disturbed.

"I was afraid of disturbing you," said Ned. He was embarrassed, a rare condition with him, which, when it did afflict him, resulted in an impression of intimidating truculence.

Cicely seemed to shrink a little, and he resolved to leave instantly.

"Oh, no!" she said shyly.

"I only wanted to say that if I could do anything for you—well, you've only to let me know."

"It's awfully kind of you," she murmured.

There was something so evidently

sincere in this murmur that his embarrassment forthwith left him.

"Thank Heaven!" he said, after his outspoken habit. "I was afraid I was putting my foot in it. But if you really don't mind my seeing you for a minute or two, I'd just like to say——"

He broke off abruptly, and she looked up at him questioningly.

"Dash it, I can't say it, Miss Farmond! But you know, don't you?"

She murmured something again, and though he could not quite hear what it was, he knew she understood and appreciated.

Leaning against the corner of the shrouded billiard table, with the blinds down and this pale slip of a girl in deep mourning, sitting in a basket chair in the dim light, he began suddenly to realize the tragedy.

"I've been too stunned till now to grasp what's happened," he said in a moment. "Our best friend gone, Miss Farmond!"

He had said exactly the right thing now.

"He certainly was mine!" she said.

"And mine, too. We may live to be a brace of Methuselahs, but I guess we'll never see his like again!"

His odd phrase made her smile for a moment despite herself. It passed swiftly and she said:

"I can't believe it yet."

Again there was silence, and then he said abruptly:

"It's little wonder you can't believe it! The thing is so extraordinary. It's incredible! A man without an enemy in the world—no robbery attempted—sitting in his own library in just about the most peaceful and out-of-the-way county in Scotland—not a sound heard by anybody—not a reason that one can possibly imagine—and yet murdered!"

"But it must have been a robber surely!"

"Why didn't he rob something then?"

"But how else——?"

"How, indeed! You've not a suspicion of any one yourself, Miss Farmond? Say it right out if you have. We don't lynch here. At least," he corrected himself as he recalled the telegraph posts, "it hasn't been done yet."

"I *can't* suspect any one!" she said earnestly. "I never met any one in my life that I could possibly imagine doing such a thing!"

"No," he said, "I guess our experiences have been pretty different. I've met lots, but then there are none of those boys here. Who is there in this place?"

He paused and stared into space.

"It must have been a tramp—some one who doesn't belong here!"

"I was trying to think whether there are any lunatics about," he said in a moment. "But there aren't any."

There was silence for some minutes. He was thinking; she did not move. Then he heard a sound, and, looking down, saw that she had her handkerchief in her hand. He had nearly bent over her before he remembered Sir Malcolm, and at the recollection he said abruptly:

"Well, I've disturbed you too long. If I can do anything—anything whatever—you'll let me know, won't you?"

"You are very, very kind," she murmured, and a note in her voice nearly made him forget the new baronet. In fact, he had to retire rather quickly to be sure of himself.

The efficiency of James Bisset was manifest at every conjuncture. Businesslike and brisk he appeared from somewhere as Cromarty reached the hall, and led him from the front regions to the butler's sitting room.

"I will bring your lunch in a moment, sir," he murmured, and vanished briskly.

The room looked out on a courtyard at the back, and through the window

Ned could see against the opposite buildings the rain driving in clouds. In the court the wind was eddying, and beneath some door he could hear it drone insistently. Though the toughest of men, he shivered a little and drew up a wicker chair close in front of the fire.

"It's incredible!" he murmured, and as he stared at the flames this thought seemed to haunt him all the time.

Bisset laid the table, and another hour passed. Ned ate a little lunch and then smoked and stared at the fire while the wind droned and blustered without ceasing, and occasionally a cross gust sent the rain drops softly pattering on the panes.

"I'm damned if I see a thing!" he suddenly exclaimed half aloud, and jumped to his feet.

Before he had time to start for the door, Bisset's mysterious efficiency was made manifest again. Precisely as he was wanted, he appeared, and this time it was clear that his own efforts had not been altogether fruitless. He had, in fact, an air of even greater complacency than usual.

"I have arrived at certain conclusions, sir," he announced.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DEDUCTIVE PROCESS.

Bisset laid on the table a sheet of note paper.

"Here," said he, "is a kin' of bit sketch plan of the library. Observing this plan attentively, sir," he continued, "you will notice two crosses, marked A and B. A is where yon wee table was standing—no the place against the wall where it was standing this morning, but where it was standing before it was knocked over last night. B is where the corp was found. You follow that, sir?"

Ned nodded.

"I follow," said he.

"Now, the principle in a' these cases of crime and detection," resumed the philosopher, assuming his lecturer's air, "is noticing such sma' points of detail as escape the eye of the ordinar' observer, taking full and accurate measurements, making a plan with the principal sites carefully markit, and drawing, as it were, logical conclusions. Applying this method now to the present instance, Mr. Cromarty, the first point to observe is that the room is twenty-six feet long, measured from the windie, which is a bit recessed or set back, as it were, to the other end of the apartment. Half of twenty-six is thirteen, and if you take the half-way line and draw approximate perpendiculars to about where the table was standing and to as near as one can remember where the middle of the corp roughly was lying, you get exactly six feet, ten and five-eighth inches, in both cases."

"An approximate perpendicular to roughly about these places gives this exact measurement?" repeated Cromarty gravely. "Well, what next?"

"Well, sir, I'll not insist too much on the coincidence, but it seems to me vera remarkable. But the two significant features of this case seem to me yon table being upset over by the windie and the corp being found over by the door."

"You're talking horse sense now," murmured Ned.

"Now, yon table was upset by Sir Reginald falling on it!"

Ned looked at him keenly.

"How do you know?"

"Because one of the legs was broken clean off!"

"What, when we saw it this morning?"

"We had none of us noticed it then, sir, but I've had a look at it since, and there's one leg broken fair off at the top. The break was half in the socket, as it were, leaving a kind of spike, and

if you stick that into the socket you can make the table look as good as new. It's all right, in fac', until you try to move it, and then, of course, the leg just drops out."

"And it wasn't like that yesterday?"

"I happened to move it myself not so long before Sir Reginald came into the room, and that's how I know for certain where it was standing and that it wasn't broken. And yon wee, light tables dinna lose their legs just with being cowpit, supposing there was nothing else than that to smash them. No, sir, it was poor Sir Reginald falling on top of it that smashed yon leg."

"Then he was certainly struck down near the window!"

"Well, we'll see that in a minute. It's no in reason, Mr. Cromarty, to suppose he deliberately opened the windie to let his ain murderer in. And it's a' just stuff and nonsense to suggest Sir Reginald was sitting on a winter's night—or next door to winter onyhow—with his windie wide open. I'm too well acquaint with his habits to believe that for a minute. And it's impossible the man can have opened a snibbed windie and got in, with some one sitting in the room, and no alarm given. So it's perfectly certain the man must have come in at the door. That's a fair deduction, is it not, sir?"

Ned Cromarty frowned into space in silence. When he spoke it seemed to be as much to himself as to Bisset.

"How did the window get unsnibbed? Everything beats me, but that beats me fairly."

"Well, sir, Mr. Rattar may no be just exac'ly as intellectual as me and you, but I think there's maybe something in his idea it was done to put us off the scent."

"Possibly—but it strikes me as a derved feeble dodge. However, what's your next conclusion?"

"My next conclusion is, sir, that

Simon Rattar may not be so vera far wrong either about Sir Reginald hearing some one at the door and starting to see who it was. Then—bang!—the door suddenly opened and afore he'd time to speak, the man had given him a bat on the head that finished him."

"And where does the table come in?"

"Well, my explanation is just this, that Sir Reginald suspected something and took the wee table as a kind of weapon."

"Rot!" said Ned ruthlessly. "You think he left the fireplace and went round by the window to fetch such a useless weapon as that?"

James Bisset was not easily damped.

"That's only a possibility, sir. Excluding that, what must have happened? For that's the way, Mr. Cromarty, to get at the fac's; you just exclude what's not possible, and what remains is the truth. If you'd read——"

"Well, come on. What's your theory now?"

"Just that Sir Reginald backed away from the door with the man after him, till he got to the table. And then down went him and the table together."

"And why didn't he cry out or raise the alarm in some way while he was backing away?"

"God, but that fits into my other deductions fine!" cried Bisset. "I hadna thought of that. Just wait, sir, till you see how the case is going to hang together in a minute."

"But how did Sir Reginald's body come to be lying near the door?"

The philosopher seemed to be inspired afresh.

"The man clearly meant to take it away and hide it somewhere—that'll be just it! And then he found it ower heavy and decided to leave it after all."

"And who was this man?"

"That's precisely where proper principles, Mr. Cromarty, lead to a number of vera interesting and instructive discoveries, and I think ye'll see, sir, that

the noose is on the road to his neck already. I've not got the actual man, mind! In fac' I've no idea who he is, but I can tell you a good few things about him—enough, in fac', to make escape practically impossible. In the first place, he was one well acquaint with the ways of the house. Is that not a fair deduction, sir?"

"Sure!" said Ned. "I've put my bottom dollar on that already."

"He came from inside this house and not outside it. How long he'd been in the house, that I cannot say, but my own deductions are he'd been in the house waiting for his chance for a good while before the master heard him at yon door. Is that not a fair deduction too, sir?"

"It's possible," said Ned, though not with great conviction.

"And now here's a point that accounts for Sir Reginald giving no alarm—Sir Reginald knew the man and couldna believe he meant mischief!"

Ned looked at him quickly and curiously.

"Well?" said he.

"Is that not a fair deduction, Mr. Cromarty?"

"Seems to fill the bill."

"And now, here's a few personal details. Yon man was a fair active, strong man to have dealt with the master the way he did. But he was not strong enough to carry off the corp like a sack of potatoes; he was no a great muckle big giant, that's to say. And finally, calculating from the distance the body was from the door and the number of steps he would be likely to take to the door, and sae arriving at his stride and deducing his height accordingly, he'd be as near as may be five feet nine inches tall. Now, sir, me and you ought to get him with a' that known!"

Ned Cromarty looked at him with a curious gleam in his eye.

"What's your own height, Bisset? he inquired.

"Five feet nine inches," said the reasoner promptly, and then suddenly his mouth fell open but his voice ceased.

"And now," pursued Ned with a grimly humorous look, "can you not think of a man just that height, pretty hefty but not a giant, who was certainly in the house last night, who knew all the ways of it, and who would never have been suspected by Sir Reginald of meaning mischief?"

"God!" exclaimed the unfortunate reasoner, "I've proved it was myself!"

"Well, and what shall I do—string you up now or hand you over to the police?"

"But, Mr. Cromarty—you don't believe that's right surely?"

Tragic though the occasion was, Ned could not refrain from one brief laugh. And then his face set hard again and he said:

"No, Bisset, I do not believe it was you. In fact, I wouldn't believe it was you if you confessed to it. But I'd advise you not to go spreading your deductions abroad! Deduction's a game that wants a bit more practice than you or I have had."

It is possible that James Bisset had never looked quite so crestfallen in his life.

"Then that's all nonsense I've been talking, sir?" he said lugubriously.

"No," said Ned emphatically, "I'll not say that either. You've brought out some good points: That broken table, the place the body was found, the possible reason why Sir Reginald gave no alarm; seems to me those have something to them. But what they mean—what to conclude; we're as far off that, Bisset, as ever!"

The philosopher's self-esteem was evidently returning as fast as it had gone.

"Then you wouldn't think there

would be any harm, sir, in my continuing my investigations?"

"On your present lines, the only harm is likely to be to yourself. Keep at it—but don't hang yourself accidentally. And let me know if you discover anything else—mind that."

"I'll mind on it, no fear, Mr. Cromarty!"

Ned left him with an expression on his countenance which indicated that the deductive process had already been resumed.

Till he arrived at his own door, the laird of Stanesland was unconscious of a single incident of his drive home. All the way his eye stared straight into space. Sometimes a gleam would light it for an instant, and then he would shake his head and the gleam would fade away.

"I can see neither a damned head nor a damned tail to it!" he said to himself as he alighted.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE QUESTION OF MOTIVE.

Two days later Mr. Ison entered Mr. Simon Rattar's room and informed him that Mr. Cromarty of Stanesland wished to see him on particular business. The lawyer was busy and this interruption seemed for the moment distinctly unwelcome. Then he grunted:

"Show him in."

In the minute or two that passed before the laird's entrance, Simon seemed to be thinking intently and finally to come to a decision, which, to judge from his reception of his client, was on rather different lines from his first thoughts when Mr. Cromarty's name was announced. To describe Simon Rattar at any time as genial would be an exaggeration, but he showed his nearest approach to geniality as he bade his client good morning.

"Sorry to interrupt you," said Ned,

"but I can't get this business out of my head, night or day. Whether you want me or not, I've got to play a hand in this game; but it's on your side, Mr. Rattar, and maybe I might be able to help a little if I could get something to go on."

The lawyer nodded.

"I quite understand. Glad to have your help, Mr. Cromarty. Dreadful affair. We're all trying to get to the bottom of it, I can assure you."

"I believe you," said Ned. "There never was a man better worth avenging than Sir Reginald."

yer. The first is about that table. It seems a leg has been broken."

"Bisset told me that before I left the house."

"And thought it was an important fact, I suppose?"



"I've been too stunned till now to grasp what's happened," he said.

"Quite so," said Simon briefly, his eyes fixed on the other's face.

"Any fresh facts?"

Simon drew a sheet of paper from his desk.

"Superintendent Sutherland has given me a note of three—for what they are worth—discovered by the but-

"What its importance is, it's hard to say, but it's a fact, and seems to me well worth noting."

"It is noted," said the procurator fiscal dryly. "But I can't see that it leads anywhere."

"Bisset maintains it implies Sir Reginald fell over it when he was struck down; and that seems to me pretty likely."

Simon shook his head.

"How do we know Sir Reginald hadn't broken it himself previously and then set it up against the wall—assuming it ever stood anywhere else, which seems to want confirmation?"

"A dashed thin suggestion!" said Ned. "However, what are the other discoveries?"

"The second is that one or two small fragments of dried mud were found under the edge of the curtain, and the third is that the hearth brush was placed in an unusual position—according to Bisset."

"And what are Bisset's conclusions?"

"That the man, whoever he was, had brought mud into the room and then swept it up with the hearth brush; these fragments being pieces that he had swept accidentally under the curtain and so overlooked."

"Good for Bisset!" exclaimed Ned. "He has got there this time, I do believe."

Simon smiled skeptically.

"Sir Reginald was in the library in his walking boots that afternoon. Naturally he would leave mud, and quite likely he swept it up himself then; though the only evidence of sweeping is Bisset's statement about the brush. And what proof is that of anything? Does your hearth brush always stay in the same position?"

"Never noticed," said Ned.

"And I don't believe anybody notices sufficiently closely to make his evidence on such a point worth a rap!" said Simon.

"A servant would."

"Well, Mr. Cromarty, make the most of the hearth brush, then."

There seemed for an instant to be a defiant note in the procurator fiscal's voice that made Ned glance at him sharply. But he saw nothing in his face but the same set and steady look.

"We're on the same side in this racket, Mr. Rattar," said Ned. "I'm only trying to help—same as you."

Simon's voice seemed now to have exactly the opposite note. For him, his tone of acquiescence was even eager.

"Quite so; quite so, Mr. Cromarty. We are acting together; exactly."

"That's all the new evidence then?" Simon nodded, and a few moments of silence followed.

"Tell me honestly," demanded Ned at last, "have you actually no clew at all? No suspicion of any kind? Haven't you got on the track of any possible reason for the deed?"

"Reason," repeated Simon. "Now we come to business, Mr. Cromarty. What's the motive? That's the point."

"Have you found one?"

Simon looked judicially discreet.

"At this moment all I can tell you is to answer the question, 'Who benefits by Sir Reginald Cromarty's death?'"

"Well—who did? Seems to me every one who knew him suffered."

"Sentimentally, perhaps—but not financially."

Ned looked at him in silence, as if an entirely new point of view were dawning on his mind. But he compressed his lips and merely asked:

"Well?"

"To begin with, nothing was stolen from the house. Therefore no outside thief or burglar gained anything. I may add also that the police have made inquiries throughout the whole county, and no bad characters are known to have been in the place. Therefore there is no ground for supposing the deed was the work of a robber, and to my mind, no evidence worth considering to support that view. The only people that gained anything, Mr. Cromarty, are those who will benefit under Sir Reginald's will."

Cromarty's expression did not change again. This was evidently the new point of view.

Simon opened a drawer and took from it a document.

"In the ordinary course of events, Sir Reginald's will would not be known till after his funeral to-morrow, but if I may regard this conversation as con-

fidential, I can tell you the principal facts so far as they affect this case."

"I don't want you to do anything you shouldn't," said Ned quickly. "If it's not the proper game to read the will now, don't."

But Silent Simon seemed determined to oblige this morning.

"It is a mere matter of form delaying till to-morrow, and I shall not read it now; merely tell you the pertinent facts briefly."

"Fire away, then. The Lord knows I want to learn every derved pertinent fact—want to badly!"

"In the first place," the lawyer began, "Lady Cromarty is life-rented in the mansion and property, less certain sums to be paid to other people, which I am coming to. She, therefore, lost her husband and a certain amount of income, and gained nothing that we know of."

"That's a cold-blooded way of putting it," said Ned with something like a shiver. "However, what next?"

"Sir Malcolm gets a thousand pounds a year to support him during the lifetime of Lady Cromarty, and afterward falls heir to the whole estate. He therefore gains a baronetcy and a thousand pounds a year immediately, and the estate is brought a stage nearer him. Miss Farmond gets a legacy of two thousand pounds. She therefore gains two thousand pounds."

"Not that she'll need it," said Ned quickly. "That item doesn't count."

Simon looked at him curiously.

"Why not?" he inquired.

Ned hesitated a moment.

"Perhaps I oughtn't to have said anything," he said, "but this conversation is confidential, and anyhow, the fact will be known soon enough now, I guess. She is engaged to Sir Malcolm."

For a moment Simon continued to look at him very hard. Then he merely said:

"Indeed?"

"Of course you won't repeat this till they care to make it known themselves. I told you so that you'd see that a legacy of two thousand pounds wouldn't count much. It only means an income of—what?"

"A hundred pounds at five per cent; eighty pounds at four."

"Well, that will be neither here nor there, now."

Again Simon stared in silence for a moment, but rather through than at his visitor, it seemed. Then he glanced down at the document again.

"James Bisset gets a legacy of three hundred pounds. There are a few smaller legacies to servants, but the only two that might have affected this case do not actually do so. One is John Robertson, Sir Reginald's chauffeur, but on the night of the crime he was away from home, and an alibi can be established till two in the morning. The other is Donald Mackay, the gardener, but he is an old man and was in bed with rheumatism that night."

"I see," observed Ned, "you are giving everybody mentioned in the will, credit for perhaps having committed the murder, supposing it was physically possible?"

"I am answering the question: Who that could conceivably have committed it, had a motive for doing so? And also, what was that motive?"

"Is that the whole list of them?"

Mr. Rattar glanced at the will again.

"Sir Reginald has canceled your own debt of twelve hundred pounds, Mr. Cromarty."

"What!" exclaimed Ned, and for a moment could say no more. Then he said in a low voice, "It's up to me more than ever!"

"That is the full list of persons within the vicinity two nights ago who gained by Sir Reginald's death," said Simon in a dry voice, as he put away the will.

"Including me?" said Ned. "Well,

all I've got to say is this, Mr. Rattar, that my plain common sense tells me that those are no motives at all. For who knew what he stood to gain by this will? Of that he stood to gain any blessed thing at all? I hadn't the foggiest notion Sir Reginald meant to cancel that debt!"

"You may not have known," said Simon still very dryly, "and it is quite possible that Bisset may not have known of his legacy. Though, on the other hand, it is likely enough that Sir Reginald mentioned the fact that he would be remembered. But Lady Cromarty presumably knew his arrangements. And it is most unlikely that he should have said nothing to his heir about his intention to make him an adequate allowance if he came into the title and Lady Cromarty was still alive and life-rented in the place. Also, it is highly probable that either Sir Reginald or Lady Cromarty told Miss Farmond that some provision would be made for her."

Ned Cromarty said nothing for a few moments, but he seemed to be thinking very hard. Then he rose from his chair and remarked:

"Well, I guess this has all got to be thought over."

He moved slowly to the door, while Simon gazed silently into space. His hand was on the handle when the lawyer turned in his chair and asked:

"Why was nothing said about Sir Malcolm's engagement to Miss Farmond?"

"Well," said Ned, "the whole thing is no business of mine, but Sir Reginald had pretty big ideas in some ways, and probably one of them was connected with his heir's marriage."

"A clandestine engagement, then?"

Ned Cromarty seemed to dislike the term.

"It's none of my business," he said shortly. "There was no blame on any

one, anyhow; and mind you, this is absolutely confidential."

The door closed behind him, and Simon was left still apparently thinking.

CHAPTER XV.

TWO WOMEN.

On the day after the funeral Lady Cromarty for the first time felt able to see the family lawyer. Simon Rattar came out in the morning in a hired car and spent more than a couple of hours with her. Then for a short time he was closeted with Sir Malcolm, who, referring to the interview afterward, described him as "infernally close and unsatisfactory"; and finally, in company with the young baronet and Cicely Farmond, he ate a hurried lunch and departed.

Ever since the fatal evening, Lady Cromarty had been shut up in her own apartments and the two young people had taken their meals together. Sir Malcolm at his brightest and best had been capricious company. He was now moody beyond all Cicely's experience of him. His newborn solemnity was the most marked feature of his demeanor, but sometimes it dissolved into pathetic demands for sympathy, and then again froze into profound and lugubrious silence. He said that he was sleeping badly, and the pallor of his face and darkness beneath his eyes seemed to confirm this. Several times he appeared to be on the point of some peculiarly solemn disclosure of his feelings or his symptoms, but always ended by upbraiding his fellow guest for her lack of sympathy, and then relapsing into silence.

Every now and then on such occasions Cicely caught him staring at her with an expression she had never seen before, and then looking hurriedly away; a disconcerting habit that made her own lot none the easier. So far as the observant Bisset could judge, the baronet seemed, indeed, to be having

so depressing an effect upon the young lady that as her friend and counselor he took the liberty of advising a change of air.

"We'll miss you vera much, Miss Farmond," he was good enough to say, "but I'm thinking that what you want is a seaside resort."

She smiled a little sadly.

"I shall have to make a change very soon, Bisset," she said. "Indeed, perhaps I ought to have let Lady Cromarty know already that I was ready to go the moment I was sure I could do nothing more for her."

She began her packing on the morning of Simon's visit. At lunch her air was a little livelier at first, as if even Simon Rattar were a welcome variety in a régime of undiluted baronet. Sir Malcolm, too, endeavored to do the honors with some degree of cheerfulness; but short though the meal was, both were silent before the end and vaguely depressed afterward.

"I can't stand the old fellow's fishy eye!" declared Sir Malcolm. "I'd as soon lunch with a codfish, dash it! Didn't you feel it too, Cicely?"

"He seemed to look at one so uncomfortably," she agreed. "I couldn't help feeling he had something on his mind against me, though I suppose he really doesn't trouble his head about my existence."

"I'm hanged if I like the way he looks at me!" muttered the baronet, and once again Cicely caught that odd expression in his eye.

That afternoon Bisset informed Miss Farmond that her ladyship desired to see her. Lady Cromarty's face looked thinner than ever and her lips more tightly compressed. In her deep mourning and with her grave air, she seemed to Cicely a monumental figure of tragedy. Her thinness and pallor and tight lips, she thought only natural, but there was one note that seemed discordant with pure desolation. The note was sounded by Lady Cromarty's eyes.

At all times they had been ready to harden upon an occasion, but Cicely thought she had never seen them as hard as they were now.

"What are your plans, Cicely?" she asked in a low, even voice that showed no feeling one way or the other.

"I have begun to pack already," said the girl. "I don't want to leave so long as I can be of any use here, but I am ready to go at any time."

She had expected to be asked where she was going, but Lady Cromarty instead of putting any question, looked at her for a few moments in silence. And it was then that a curious, uncomfortable feeling began to possess the girl. It had no definite form and was founded on no reason, beyond the steady regard of those hard, dark eyes.

"I had rather you stayed."

Cicely's own eyes showed her extreme surprise.

"Stayed—here?"

"Yes."

"But are you sure? Wouldn't you really rather be alone? It isn't for my sake, is it, because—"

"It is for mine. I want you to remain here and keep me company."

She spoke without a trace of smile or any softening of her face, and Cicely still hesitated.

"But would it really be convenient? You have been very kind to me, and if you really want me here—"

"I do," interrupted Lady Cromarty in the same even voice. "I want you particularly to remain."

"Very well, then I shall. Thank you very much—"

Again she was cut short.

"That is settled then. Perhaps you will excuse me now, Cicely."

The girl went downstairs very thoughtfully. At the foot the young baronet met her.

"Have you settled where to go?" he asked.

"Lady Cromarty has asked me to stay on with her."

"Stay on in this house of mourning? Oh, no, Cicely!"

"I have promised," she said.

The young man grew curiously agitated.

"Oh, don't stay here!" he besought her. "It keeps me in such dreadful suspense!"

"In suspense!" she exclaimed. "Whatever do you mean, Malcolm?"

Again she saw that look in his eye, and again he raised a sympathy-beseeching wail. Cicely's patience began to give way.

"Really, Malcolm!" she cried tartly, "if you have anything to say, say it, but don't go on like a baby!"

"Like a baby!" repeated the deeply affronted baronet. "Heavens, would you liken me to *that*, of all things! I had meant to confide in you, Cicely, but you have made it impossible. Impossible!" he repeated somberly, and stalked to the door.

Next morning, Sir Malcolm left for London, his confidence still locked in his breast, and Cicely was alone with Lady Cromarty.

CHAPTER XVI.

RUMOR.

One windy afternoon a man on a bicycle struggled up to the door of Stanesland Castle and while waiting for an answer to his ring, studied the front of that ancient building with an expression which would at once have informed his intimates that he was meditating on the principles of Scottish baronial architecture. A few minutes later Mr. Bisset was shown into the laird of Stanesland's smoking room and addressed Mr. Cromarty with a happy blend of consciousness of his own importance and respect for the laird's.

"I have taken the liberty of calling, sir, for to lay before you a few fresh datas."

"Fire away," said the laird.

"In the first place, sir, I understand

that you have been making inquiries through the county yourself, sir; is that not so?"

"I've been through this blessed county, Bisset, from end to end to see whether I could get on the track of any suspicious stranger. I've been working both with the police and independent of the police, and I've drawn blank."

Bisset looked distinctly disappointed.

"I've heard, sir, one or two stories which I was hoping might have something in them."

"I've heard about half a dozen and gone into them all, and there's nothing in one of them."

"Half a dozen stories?" Bisset's eye began to look hopeful again. "Well, sir, perhaps if I was to go into some of them again in the light of my fresh datas, they might wear, as it were, a different aspect."

"Well," said Ned, "what have you found? Have a cigar and let's hear what you've been at."

The expert crackled the cigar approvingly between his fingers, lit it with increased approval, and began:

"Yon man was behind the curtains all the time."

"The devil he was! How do you know?"

"Well, sir, it's a matter of deduction. Ye see, supposing he came in by the door, there are objections, and supposing he came in by the windie, there are objections. Either way there are objections which make it difficult for to accept those theories. And then it struck me—the man must have been behind the curtains all the while!"

"He must have come either by the door or window to get there."

"That's true, Mr. Cromarty. But such minor points we can consider in a wee while, when we have seen how everything is otherwise explained. Now supposing we have the murderer behind the curtains; that brings him within six feet of where the wee table was standing. How did he get Sir

Reginald to come to the table? He made some kind of sound. What kind of sound? Some imitation of an animal; probably of a cat. How did Sir Reginald not cry out when he saw the man? Because he never did see the man! How did he not see him?"

"Man was a ventriloquist and made a sound in the other direction," suggested Ned with extreme gravity.

"God, but that's possible, Mr. Cromarty! I hadna thought of that! Well, it'll fit into the facts all right, you'll see. My theory was that either the man threw something at the master and knocked him down that way, or he was able to reach out and give him a bat on the head without moving from the curtains."

"He must have been an awkward customer."

"He was that! A great, tall man with long arms. And what had he at the end of them? Either a club such as savages use or something to throw like a boomerang. And he could imitate animals, and as you say, he was probably a ventriloquist. And he was that active and strong he could get into the house through one of the windies, just like a great monkey. Now what's the history of that man?"

"Pretty wild, I guess."

"Ah, but one can say more than that, sir. He was not an ordinary Englishman or Scotchman. He was from the Colonies or America or one of thae wild places! Is that not a fair deduction, sir?"

"It all points to that," said Ned, with a curious look.

"It points to that indeed, sir. Now where's he hidden himself? It should not be difficult to find him with all that to go on."

"A tall, active, strong man who has lived in the Colonies or America; one ought to get him. Has he only one eye, by any chance?"

The reasoner gazed petrified at his counselor.

"God, but I've just described yourself, sir!" he cried in an unhappy voice.

"You're determined to hang one of us, Bisset."

For a moment Bisset seemed to find conversation difficult. Then he said miserably:

"So it's no good, and all the alternatives just fa' to pieces."

The extreme dejection of his voice struck the other sharply.

"Alternatives to what?" he asked.

Bisset did not answer.

"What's on your mind, man?" demanded Cromarty.

"The reason, sir, I've got that badly off the rails with my deductions is just that I *had* to find some other theory than the story that's going about."

"What story?"

"You've no heard it, sir?"

Ned shook his head.

"I hardly like to repeat it, sir; it's that cruel and untrue. They're saying Sir Malcolm and Miss Farmond had got engaged to be married."

"Well?" said Ned sharply, and he seemed to control his feelings with an effort.

"A secret engagement, like, that Sir Reginald would never have allowed. But there I think they're right, sir. Sir Reginald was unco' taken up with Miss Farmond, but he'd have looked higher for his heir. And so as they couldna get married while he was alive, neither of them having any money, well, sir, this story says——"

He broke off and neither spoke for an instant.

"Good God!" murmured Cromarty.

"They actually accuse Malcolm Cromarty and Miss Cicely of——"

He paused too, and Bisset nodded.

"Who is saying this?"

"It seems to be the clash of the hail country by this time, sir."

He seemed a little frightened at the effect of his own words; and it was small wonder. Ned Cromarty was a nasty-looking customer at that moment.

"Who started the lie?"

"It's just the ignorance and want of education of the people, I'm thinking, Mr. Cromarty. They're no able to grasp the proper principles——"

"Lady Cromarty must be told! She could put a stop to it!"

Something in Bisset's look pulled him up sharply.

"I'm afraid her ladyship believes it herself, sir. Maybe you have heard she has kept Miss Farmond to stay on with her."

"I have."

"Well, sir," said Bisset very slowly and deliberately, "I'm thinking—it's just to watch her."

Ned Cromarty had been smoking a pipe. There was a crack now as his teeth went through the mouthpiece. He flung the pipe into the fire, jumped up, and began pacing the room without a word or a glance at the other. At last he stopped as abruptly as he had started.

"This slander has got to be stopped!"

And then he paced on.

"Just what I was saying to myself, sir. It was likely a wee thing of over-anxiety to look it that made me think o' the possibility of a wild man from America, which was perhaps a bit beyond the limits of what ye might call, as it were, scientific deduction."

"When did Lady Cromarty begin to take up this attitude?"

"Well, the plain truth is, sir, that her ladyship has been keeping sae much to herself that it's not rightly possible to tell what's been in her mind. But it was the afternoon when Mr. Rattar had been at the house that she sent for Miss Farmond and tellt her then she was wanting her to stop on."

"That would be after she knew the contents of the will! I wonder if the idea had entered her head before, or if the will alone started it? Old Simon would never start such a scandal himself about his best client. He knows too

well which side his bread is buttered for that! But he might have talked his infernal jargon about the motive and the people who stood to gain by the death. That might have been enough to set her suspicions off."

"Or I was thinking maybe, sir, it was when her ladyship heard of the engagement."

"Ah!" exclaimed Ned, stopping suddenly again, "that's possible. When did she hear?"

Bisset shook his head.

"That beats me again, sir. Her own maid likely has been telling her things the time we've not been seeing her."

"Did the maid—or did you know about the engagement?"

"Servants are uneducated creatures," said Bisset contemptuously. "And women at the best have just the ae' thought—who's gaun to be fool enough to marry next? They were always gossiping about Mr. Malcolm and Miss Cicely, but there was never what I should call a data to found a deduction on; not for a sensible person. I never believed it myself, but it's like enough her ladyship may have suspected it for a while back."

"I suppose Lady Cromarty has been nearly distracted?"

"Very near, sir."

"That's her only excuse. But the story is such obvious nonsense, Bisset, that surely no one in his proper senses really believes it?"

The philosopher shook a wise head.

"I have yet to learn, Mr. Cromarty, what folks will not believe."

"They've got to stop believing this!" said Ned emphatically.

CHAPTER XVII.

A SUGGESTION.

Next morning Simon Rattar was again informed that Mr. Cromarty of Stanesland wished to see him, and again the announcement seemed to be unwelcome. He was silent for several



He sprang up and began to pace the floor, deliberately at first, and then more rapidly and with increasing agitation.

seconds before answering, and when he allowed Mr. Cromarty to be shown in, it was with an air which suggested the getting over a distasteful business as soon as possible.

"Well, Mr. Cromarty?" he grunted brusquely.

Mr. Cromarty never beat about the bush.

"I've come to see you about this scandalous story that's going round."

The lawyer glanced at his papers, as if to indicate that they were of more importance than scandals.

"What story?" he inquired.

"That Sir Malcolm and Miss Farnond were concerned in Sir Reginald's murder."

There was something compelling in Ned's directness. Simon pushed aside the papers and looked at him fixedly.

"Oh," he said. "They say that, do they?"

"Haven't you heard?"

Simon's grunt was noncommittal.

"Well, anyway, this darned story is going about, and something's got to be done to stop it."

"What do you suggest?"

"Are you still working the case for all you know how?"

Simon seemed to resent this inquiry a little.

"I am the procurator fiscal. The police make the actual inquiries. They have done everything they could."

"They have done? Do you mean that they have stopped looking for the murderer?"

"Certainly not. They are still inquiring; not that it is likely to be of much further use."

There seemed to be a sardonic note in his last words that deepened Cromarty's frown and kindled his eye.

"You mean to suggest that any conclusion has been reached?"

"Nothing is absolutely certain," said Simon.

Again, the accent on the "absolutely" seemed to rouse his visitor's ire.

"You believe this story, do you?"

"If I *believed* it, I should order an arrest. I have just told you nothing is absolutely certain."

"Look here," said Cromarty, "I don't want to crab Superintendent Sutherland or his men, but you want to get somebody better than them on to this job."

Though the procurator fiscal kept his feelings well in hand, it was evident that this suggestion struck him more unfavorably than anything his visitor had said yet. He even seemed for one instant to be a little startled by its audacity.

"I disagree," he muttered.

"Now don't you take offense, Mr. Rattar," said Ned with a sudden smile. "I'm not aiming this at you, but, hang it, you know as well as I do that Sutherland is no great shakes at detection. They are all just country bobbies. What we want is a London detective."

Simon seemed to have recovered his equanimity during this speech. He shook his head emphatically, but his

voice was as dispassionately brusque as ever.

"London detective? Much over-rated people, I assure you. No use in a case of this kind."

"The very kind of a case a real copper-bottomed expert would be some use in!"

"You are thinking of detectives in stories, Mr. Cromarty. The real men are no better than Sutherland—not a bit. I believe in Sutherland. Better man than he looks. Very shrewd, most painstaking. Couldn't have a better man. Useless expense getting a man from London."

"Don't you trouble about the expense, Mr. Rattar. That can be arranged all right. I want a first-class man engaged."

The sudden glance which the lawyer shot at him struck Ned as unusual in his experience of Simon Rattar. He appeared to be startled again, and yet it was not mere annoyance that seemed to show for the fraction of a second in his eye. And then the next instant the man's gaze was as cold and steady as ever. He pursed his lips and considered his answer in silence before he spoke.

"You are a member of the family, Mr. Cromarty; the actual head of it, in fact, I believe."

"Going by pedigrees, I believe I am, but being a member is reason enough for my wanting to get daylight through this business—and see somebody swing for it!"

"What if you made things worse?"

"Worse! How could they be?"

"Mr. Cromarty, I am the procurator fiscal in charge of this case. But I am also lawyer and factor to the Cromarty family, and my father was before me. If there was evidence enough—clear and proper evidence—to convict any person of this crime, it would be my duty as procurator fiscal to convict him. But there is no definite evidence, as you know yourself. All we can do, if we

push this matter too far, is to make a family scandal public. Are you as the head of the Cromarty family, and I as their factor, to do this?"

It was difficult to judge with what feelings Ned Cromarty heard this deliberate statement and appeal. His mouth was as hard as the lawyer's and his eye revealed nothing.

"Then you propose to hush the thing up?"

"I said nothing about hushing up. I propose to wait till I get some *evidence*, Mr. Cromarty. It is a little difficult perhaps for a layman to realize what evidence means, but I can tell you—and any lawyer, or any detective, would tell you—we have nothing that can be called evidence yet."

"And you won't get any till you call in somebody a cut above Sutherland."

"The scent is too cold by this time."

"Who let it cool?" interrupted Ned.

For a moment the lawyer's eyes looked unpleasant.

"Every effort was made to find a clew; by yourself as well as by the police. And let me tell you, Mr. Cromarty, that our efforts have not been as fruitless as you seem to think."

"What have we discovered?"

"In the first place that there was no robbery committed and no sign of anybody having entered the house from the outside."

Ned shook his head.

"That's a lot too strong. I believe the man *did* come in by the window."

"You admit there is no proof?"

"Sure," said Ned candidly. "I quite admit there is no proof of anything—yet."

"No robbery, no evidence of any one having come in by the window—"

"No proof," corrected Ned. "I maintain that the window being unsnibbed and that mud on the floor and the table near the window being upset is evidence; but not proof positive."

Simon's patience had by this time become exemplary. His only wish seemed

to be to convince by irresistible argument this obstinate objector. It struck the visitor, moreover, that in this effort the lawyer was displaying a fluency not at all characteristic of silent Simon.

"Well, let us leave it at that. Suppose there be a possibility that entry was actually made by the window. It is a bare possibility against the obvious and easy entrance by the door—near which, remember, the body was found. Then, as I have pointed out, there was no robbery, and not a trace has been found of anybody outside that house with a motive for the crime."

"Except me."

"Unless you care to except yourself. But neither you nor the police have found any bad characters in the place."

"That's true enough," Ned admitted reluctantly.

"On the other hand there were within the house two people with a very strong motive for committing the crime."

"I deny that!" cried Ned with a sudden gleam of ferocity in his eye that seemed to disconcert the lawyer.

"Deny it? You can scarcely deny that two young people in love with one another and secretly engaged, with no money, and no chance of getting married, stood to gain everything they wanted by a death that gave them freedom to marry, a baronetcy, a thousand a year, and two thousand in cash besides?"

"Damn it, Mr. Rattar, is the fact that a farmer benefits by a shower any evidence that he has turned on the rain?"

"I have repeatedly said, Mr. Cromarty, that there is no definite evidence to convict anybody. But nothing would have been easier than making an end of Sir Reginald Cromarty, to anybody inside that house whom he would never suspect till they struck the blow. All the necessary conditions are fulfilled by this view of the case, whereas every other view—every other view, mind

you, Mr. Cromarty—is confronted with these difficulties—no robbery, no definite evidence of entry, no explanation of Sir Reginald's extraordinary silence when the man appeared, no bad characters in the neighborhood, and, above all, no motive."

At the end of this speech Simon shut his mouth tight and leaned back in his chair. For a moment it seemed as though Ned Cromarty was impressed by the lawyer's view of the case. But when he replied, his voice, though deliberate, had a fighting ring in it, and his single eye, a fighting light.

"Then you propose to leave this young couple under the most damnable cloud of suspicion that a man and a woman could lie under—simply leave 'em there, and let that be the end of it?"

Simon seemed to be divided between distaste for this way of putting the case, and anxiety still to convince his visitor.

"I propose to avoid the painful family scandal which further disclosures and more publicity would almost certainly bring about, so long as I am justified as procurator fiscal in taking this course. And until I get more evidence, I am not only justified but forced to take this course."

Ned suddenly jumped to his feet.

"I'm no lawyer," said he, "but to me you seem to be arguing in the damndest circle I ever met. You won't do anything because you can't get more evidence. And you won't look for more evidence because you don't want to do anything."

There was more than a hint of temper in Simon's eye and his answer was rapped out sharply.

"I certainly do not *want* to cause a family scandal. I haven't said all I could say about Sir Malcolm if I were pressed!"

"Why not?"

"I've told you. Suspicion is not evidence, but if I do get evidence, those

who will suffer by it had better beware!"

Ned turned at the door and surveyed him with a cool and caustic eye.

"That's talk," he said, "and something has got to be *done*."

He was gone, and Simon Rattar was left frowning at the closed door. The frown remained, but became now thoughtful rather than indignant. Then he sprang up and began to pace the floor, deliberately at first, and then more rapidly and with increasing agitation.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TWELVE HUNDRED POUNDS.

Ned Cromarty had returned home and was going upstairs, when he heard a voice cry:

"Ned!"

The ancient stone stair, spiraling up around the time-worn pillar that seemed to have no beginning or end, gave at intervals on to doors which looked like apertures in a cliff. Through one of these he turned and at the end of a brief passage came to his sister's sitting room. In that medieval setting of ponderous stone, it looked almost fantastic in its daintiness. It was a small room of many cushions and many colors, its floor covered with the softest rugs and its walls with innumerable photographs, largely of country houses where Miss Cromarty had visited.

Evidently she was a lady accustomed to a comfortable life in her roving days, and her sitting room seemed to indicate very distinctly that she proposed to live up to this high standard permanently.

"Oh, Neddy dear, I want to talk to you about something," she began in her brisk way and with her brightest smile.

Her brother, though of a simple nature, was by this time aware that when he was termed "Neddy dear" the conversation was apt to turn on Miss Cromarty's requirements.

"Well," said he, "how much is the check to be this time?"

"How clever you're getting!" she laughed. "But it isn't a check I want this time. It's only a motor car."

He looked at her doubtfully for a moment.

"Pulling my leg, or a real car?"

"Real car, of course—nice one, too!"

"But my dear girl, we've just put down our car. You agreed it was necessary."

"I agreed then; but it isn't necessary now."

"Have *you* come into a fortune? I haven't!"

"You've come into twelve hundred pounds."

Again he looked at her, and this time his expression changed.

"That's only a debt wiped out."

"Well, and your great argument for economy was that you had to pay back that debt. Now you haven't! See, Neddy dear?"

Her brother began to shake his head, and her smile became a little less bright.

"I don't want to get my affairs into a tangle again just yet."

"But they weren't in a bad tangle. Canceling that debt makes us absolutely all right again. It's absurd for people like us not to have a car! Look at the distance from our neighbors! One can't go anywhere. I'll undertake to keep down the household expenses if you get the car."

Her brother frowned out of the window.

"No," he said, "it's too soon to get a car again."

"But you told me you had got part of that twelve hundred pounds in hand and hoped to make up the rest very soon. What are you going to do with the money now?"

He glanced at her over his shoulder for an instant and then his mouth assumed a grim and obstinate look she knew too well.

"I may need the money," he said

briefly. "And I'm not much in the mood at this moment for buying things."

Behind his back Lilian made a little grimace. Then in a tone of sisterly expostulation she said:

"You are worrying too much over this affair, Ned. You've done all you can——"

He interrupted her brusquely.

"And it's dashed little! What have I actually done? Nothing! One needs a better man than me."

"Well, there's your friend Silent Simon, and all the police——"

"A fat lot of good they are!" said Ned.

His sister looked a little surprised at his unusual shortness of temper. To her he was very rarely like this.

"You need a good day's shooting to take your mind off it for a little," she suggested.

He turned upon her hotly.

"Do you know the story that's going about, Lilian?"

"Sir Malcolm and the Farmond girl? Oh, rather," she nodded.

"Is that how it strikes you?"

Lilian Cromarty jumped. There was something very formidable in her brother's voice.

"My dear Ned, don't frighten me! Eat me if you like, but eat me quietly. I didn't say I believed the story."

"I hope not," he said in the same grim tone, "but do you *mean* to say it doesn't strike you as the damndest slander ever spread?"

"To myself I hadn't called it the 'damndest' anything. But how do I know whether it's a slander?"

"You actually think it might conceivably be true?"

She shrugged her well-gowned shoulders.

"I never could stand Malcolm Cromarty—a conceited little jackanapes. He hasn't a penny and he was head over ears in debt."

It was his turn to start.

"Was he?"

"Oh, rather! Didn't you know? Owed money everywhere."

"But such a crime as that!"

"A man with ties and hair like his is capable of anything. You know quite well yourself he is a rotter."

"Anyhow, you can't believe Cicely Farmond had anything to do with it?"

Again she shrugged her shoulders.

"My dear Ned, I'm not a detective. A pretty face is no proof a woman is a saint. I told you before that there was generally something in the blood in those cases."

As he stared at her, it seemed as though her words had indeed rushed back to his memory, and that they hit him hard.

"People don't say that, do they?" he asked in a low voice.

"Really, Ned, I don't know everything people say; but they are not likely to overlook much in such a case."

He stood for a moment in silence.

"She—I mean they've both got to be cleared!" he said, and strode out of the room.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE EMPTY COMPARTMENT.

It was on this same evening that Superintendent Sutherland was almost rewarded for his vigilance by having something distinctly suspicious to report. As it happened, it proved a disappointing incident, but it gave the superintendent something to think about.

He was going a few stations down the line to investigate a rumor of a suspicious person seen in that neighborhood. It was a vague and improbable rumor and the superintendent was setting out merely as a matter of form, and to demonstrate his vigilance and almost abnormal sense of duty. Darkness had already fallen an hour or two before when he strode with dignified gait down the platform, exchanging a greeting with an acquaintance or two,

till he came to the front carriage of the train. He threw open the door of the rear compartment, saw that it was empty, and was just going to enter when, glancing over his shoulder, he perceived his own cousin, Mr. MacAlister, upon the platform. Closing the door, he stepped down again and greeted him.

Mr. MacAlister hailed him with even more than usual friendliness, and after a few polite preliminaries drew him insidiously toward the far side of the platform. An intelligent, inveterate, and persevering curiosity was Mr. MacAlister's dominating characteristic, and as soon as he had got his distinguished kinsman out of earshot of the herd, he inquired in a hushed voice,

"And what's doing about the murder noo, George?"

The superintendent pursed his lips and shook his head.

"Aye, man, yon's a proper puzzle," said he.

"But you'll have gotten a guid idea whae's din it by noo, George?" said Mr. MacAlister persuasively.

"Weel," admitted the superintendent, "we maybe have our notions, but there's no evidence yet, Robbie; that's the fair truth. As the fiscal says, there's no evidence."

"I'd like fine to hae a crack wi' you about it, George," sighed Mr. MacAlister. "I may tell you I've notions of ma own; no bad notions, either."

"Well," said the superintendent, moving off, "I'd have enjoyed a crack myself if it wassa that I've got to be off by this train."

"Man!" cried his kinsman, "I'm for off by her mysel'! Come on, we'll hae our crack yet."

The tickets had already been taken and the doors were closed as the two recrossed the platform.

"This carriage is empty," said the superintendent, and threw open the door of the same compartment he had almost entered before.

But it was not empty now. In one of the further corners sat a man wrapped in a dark-colored ulster. A black felt hat was drawn down over his eyes, and his muffled face was resting on his hand. So much the superintendent saw in the brief moment during which he stood at the open door, and it struck him at once that the man must be suffering from toothache. And then his cousin caught him by the arm and drew him back.

"Here, man, the carriage next door is empty!" cried he, and the superintendent closed the door and followed him.

It was scarcely more than a minute later when the whistle blew and they were off; and Mr. MacAlister took out his pipe and prepared himself to receive official confidences. But the miles went by, and though he plied his questions incessantly and skillfully, no confidences were forthcoming. The superintendent, in fact, had something else to think about. All at once he asked abruptly:

"Robbie, did ye see yon man next door sitting with his face in his hands?"

"Aye," said Mr. MacAlister, "I noticed the man."

"Did ye ken who he was?"

"No," said Mr. MacAlister, "I did not."

"Had ye seen him on the platform?"

"No," said Mr. MacAlister, "I had not."

"I didna see him myself," said the superintendent musingly. "It seems funnylike, a man dressed like you and with his face wrapped up, too—and a man forbye that's a stranger to us both, coming along the platform and getting into that carriage, and me not noticing him. I'm not used not to notice people, Robbie."

"It's your business, George," said Mr. MacAlister, and then as he gazed at his cousin's thoughtful face, his own grew suddenly animated.

"You're not thinking he's to dae wi' the murder, are you!" he cried.

"I'm not sure what to think till I've had another look into yon carriage," said the superintendent cautiously.

"We're slowing doon the noo!" cried Mr. MacAlister. "George, I'll come and hae a look wi' you!"

The train was hardly in the platform before the superintendent was out, with Mr. MacAlister after him, and the door of the next compartment was open almost as soon as the train was at rest. Never had the superintendent been more vigilant; and never had his honest face looked blanker.

"Jove! It's empty!" he murmured.

"God save us!" murmured Mr. MacAlister, and then he was visited by an inspiration which struck his relative afterward as one of the unhappiest he had ever suffered from. "This canna be the richt carriage!" he cried. "Come on, Geordie, let's hae a look in the ithers!"

By the time they had looked into all the compartments of the carriage, the guard was waving his flag and the two men climbed hurriedly in again. The brooding silence of the superintendent infected even Mr. MacAlister, and neither spoke for several minutes. Then the superintendent said bitterly,

"It was you hurrying me off to look in thae other carriages, Robbie!"

"What was?" inquired Mr. MacAlister a little nervously.

"I ought to have stopped and looked under the seats!"

Mr. MacAlister shook his head and declared grimly:

"There was naething under the seats. I could see that fine. And, onyhow, we can hae a look at the next stop."

"As if he'll be waiting for us, now he kens we're looking for him!"

"But there was naething there!" persisted Mr. MacAlister.

"Then what's come over the man? Here were we sitting next the platform. He can't have got out afore we started, or we'd have seen him. Folks don't

disappear into the air! I'll try under the seats, though I doubt the man will have been up and out while we were wasting our time in yon other carriages."

At the next station they searched that mysterious compartment earnestly and thoroughly, but there was not a sign of the muffled stranger, under the seats or anywhere else. Again the superintendent was silent for a space, and then he said confidentially:

"I'm just wondering if it's worth while reporting the thing, Robbie. The fiscal might have a kin' of unpleasant way of looking at it. Besides, there's really naething to report. Anyhow, I'll think it over. And that being the case, the less said the better. I can tell ye all that's known about the case, Robbie, knowing that you'll be discreet."

"Oh, you can trust me," said Mr. MacAlister earnestly. "I'll no breathe a word o' yon man. Weel, now, you were saying you'd tell me the hail story."

By this judicious arrangement Mr. MacAlister got his money's worth of sensational disclosures, and the superintendent was able to use his discretion and think the incident over. He thought over it very hard and finally decided that he was demonstrating his vigilance quite sufficiently without mentioning the trifling mystery of the empty compartment.

CHAPTER XX.

THE SPORTING VISITOR.

In summer and autumn, visitors were not uncommon in this remote countryside; mostly shooting or fishing people who rented the country houses, raised the local prices, and were described by the tradesmen as benefiting the county greatly. But in late autumn and winter this fertilizing stream ceased to flow, and when the trains from the south crawled in, the porters and the boots from the hotels resigned themselves

to welcoming a merely commercial form of traveler.

It was therefore with considerable pleasure and surprise that they observed one afternoon an unmistakably sporting gentleman descend from a first-class compartment and survey them with a condescending yet affable eye.

"Which is the best of these hotels?" he demanded with an amiable smile, as he surveyed through a single eyeglass the names on the caps of the various boots.

His engaging air disarmed the inquiry of embarrassment, and even when he finally selected the King's Arms Hotel, the other boots merely felt regret that they had not secured so promising a client. His luggage confirmed the first favorable impression. It included a gun case, a bag of golf clubs, and one or two handsome leather articles. Evidently he meant to make more than a passing visit, and as he strolled down the platform, his leisurely, nonchalant air and something even in the way in which he smoked his cigarette in its amber holder, suggested a gentleman who, having arrived here, was in no hurry to move on. On a luggage label the approving boots noted the name of "F. T. Carrington."

When he arrived at the King's Arms, Mr. Carrington continued to produce favorable impressions. He was a young man, apparently a little over thirty, above middle height, with a round, ingenuous, very agreeable face, smooth fair hair, a little, neatly trimmed mustache, and a monocle that lent just the necessary touch of distinction to what might otherwise have been a too good-humored physiognomy. His tweed suit was fashionably cut and of a distinctly sportive pattern, and he wore a pair of light spats. In short, there could be no mistaking him for anything but a gentleman of position and leisure with strong sporting proclivities, and his manner amply confirmed this. It was almost indolent in its leisurely ease.

Miss Peterkin, the capable manageress of the King's Arms, was at first disposed to think Mr. Carrington a trifle too superior, and, as she termed it, "la-de-da," but a very few minutes' conversation with the gentleman completely reassured her. He was so polite and so good-humored and so ready to be pleased with everything he saw and anything she suggested, that they became firm friends within ten minutes of his arrival, and after Mr. Carrington had disposed of his luggage in the bedroom and private sitting room which he engaged, and partaken of a little dinner, she found herself welcoming him into her own sitting room where a few choice spirits nightly congregated.

It is true that these spirits, though choice, were hardly of what she called Mr. Carrington's "class," but then, in all her experience she had never met a gentleman of such fashion and such a superior air, who adapted himself so charmingly to any society. In fact, "charming" was the very adjective for him, she decided.

About his own business he was perfectly frank. He had heard of the sporting possibilities of the county and had come to look out for a bit of fishing or shooting, preferably fishing, for it seemed he was an enthusiastic angler. Of course, it was too late in the season for any fishing this year, but he was looking ahead as he preferred to see things for himself instead of trusting to an agent's description. He had brought his gun just on the chance of getting a day somewhere, and his clubs in case there happened to be a golf links. In short, he seemed evidently to be a young man of means who lived for sport; and what other question could one ask about such a satisfactory type of visitor? Absolutely none, in Miss Peterkin's opinion.

As a matter of fact, she found very early in the evening and continued to find thereafter, that the most engaging feature of Mr. Carrington's character

was the interest he took in other people's business, so that the conversation very quickly strayed away from his own concerns—and remained away. It was not that he showed any undue curiosity; far from it. He was simply so sympathetic and such a good listener and put questions that showed he was following everything you said to him in a way that really very few people did. And moreover, in spite of his engaging frankness, there was an indefinable air of discretion about him that made one feel safe to tell him practically everything. She herself told him the sad story of her brother in Australia—a tale which, as a rule, she told only to her special intimates—before he had been in her room half an hour.

But with the arrival of three or four choice spirits the conversation became more general and it was naturally not long before it turned on the greatest local sensation and mystery within the memory of man—the Cromarty murder. Mr. Carrington's surprise was extreme when he realized that he was actually in the county where the tragedy had occurred, within a very few miles of the actual spot, in fact. Of course, he had read about it in the papers.

"I say, how interesting!"

"Oh," said Miss Peterkin with becoming pride, "we are getting quite famous I can assure you, Mr. Carrington."

"Rather so!" cried he. "I've read quite a lot about this Carnegie case."

"Cromarty," corrected one of the spirits.

"Cromarty, of course, I mean! I'm rather an ass at names, I'm afraid." The young man smiled brightly and all the spirits sympathized. "Oh, yes, I've seen it reported in the papers. And now to think, here I am in the middle of it, by George! How awfully interesting! I say, Miss Peterkin, what about these gentlemen having another wee droppie with me, all round, just to celebrate the occasion?"

With such an appreciative and hospitable audience, Miss Peterkin and the choice spirits spent a long and delightful evening in retailing every known circumstance of the drama, and several that were certainly unknown to the authorities. He was vastly interested, though naturally very shocked, to hear who was commonly suspected of the crime.

"Do you mean to say his own heir—and a young girl like that— By Jove, I say, how dreadful!" he exclaimed, and in fact he would hardly believe such a thing conceivable until all the choice spirits in turn had assured him that there was practically no doubt about it.

The energetic part played by Mr. Simon Rattar in unraveling the dark skein, or at least in trying to, was naturally described at some length, and Mr. Carrington showed his usual sympathetic and, one might almost say, entranced appreciation of the many facts told him concerning that local celebrity.

Finally, Miss Peterkin insisted on getting out the back numbers of the local paper giving the full details of the case, and with many thanks he took these off to read before he went to bed.

"But mind you don't give yourself the creeps and keep yourself from going to sleep, Mr. Carrington," she warned him with the last words.

"By Jove, that's an awful thought!" he exclaimed, and then his eyes twinkled. "Send me up another whisky and soda to cure the creeps!" said he.

Miss Peterkin thought he was quite one of the pleasantest, and promised to be one of the most profitable gentlemen she had met for a very long time.

Next morning he assured her he had kept the creeps at bay sufficiently to enjoy an excellent night's sleep in a bed that did the management credit. In fact, he had thoroughly enjoyed reading the mystery and had even begun to feel some curiosity to see the scene of the

tragedy. He proposed to have a few walks and drives through the neighboring country, he said, looking at its streams and lochs with an eye to sporting possibilities, and it would be interesting to be able to recognize Keldale House if he chanced to pass near it.

Miss Peterkin told him which road led to Keldale and how the house might be recognized, and suggested that he should walk out that way this very morning. He seemed a little doubtful; spoke of his movements as things that depended very much on the whim of the moment, just as such an easy-going young man would be apt to do, and rather indicated that a shorter walk would suit him better that morning.

And then a few minutes later she saw him saunter past her window, wearing a light gray felt hat at a graceful angle, and apparently taking a sympathetic interest in a small boy trying to mount a bicycle.

CHAPTER XXI.

MR. CARRINGTON'S WALK.

Mr. Carrington's easy saunter lasted till he had turned out of the street on which the King's Arms stood, when it passed into an easy walk. Though he had seemed on the whole disinclined to go in the Keldale direction that morning, nevertheless he continued to head that way till at last he was on the high-road, with the little town behind him; and then his pace altered again. He stepped out now like the sportsman he was, and was doing a good four miles an hour by the time he was out of sight of the last houses.

For a man who had come out to gather ideas as to the sporting possibilities of the country, Mr. Carrington seemed to pay singularly little attention to his surroundings. He appeared in fact to be thinking about something else all the time, and the first sign of interest he showed in anything outside his thoughts was when he found him-



A black felt hat was drawn down over his eyes, and his muffled face was resting on his hand.

self within sight of the lodge gates of Keldale House, with the avenue sweeping away from the road toward the roofs and chimneys amid the trees. At the sight of this he stopped, and leaning over the low wall at the roadside, gazed with much interest at the scene of the tragedy he had heard so much of last night. The choice spirits, had they been there to see, would have been gratified to find that their graphic narratives had sent this indolent-looking gentleman to view the spot.

From the house and grounds his eye traveled back to the road and then surveyed the surrounding country very attentively. He even stood on top of the wall to get a wider view; and then all of a sudden he jumped down again and adopted the reverse procedure, bending now so that little more than his head appeared above the wall. And the reason for this change of plan appeared to be a figure which had emerged from the trees and began to move along a path between the fields.

Mr. Carrington studied this figure with concentrated attention, and as it drew nearer and became more distinct, a light leaped into his eye that gave him a somewhat different expression from any his acquaintances of last night had observed. He saw that the path followed a small stream and ran at an angle to the highroad, joining it at last at a point some little distance back toward the town. He looked quickly up and down the road. Not a soul was in sight to see his next, very curious performance. The leisurely Mr. Carrington crossed to the farther side, where he was invisible from the path, and then set out to run at a rapid pace till he reached the junction of path and road. And then he turned down the path.

But now his bearing altered again in a very extraordinary way. His gait fell once more to a saunter and his angling enthusiasm seemed suddenly to have returned, for he frequently studied the burn as he strolled along, and there was no sign of any thoughtfulness on his ingenuous countenance. There were a few willows beside the path, and the path itself meandered, and this was doubtless the reason why he appeared entirely unconscious of the approach of another foot passenger till they were within a few yards of one another. And then Mr. Carrington stopped suddenly, seemed to hesitate, pulled out his watch and glanced at it, and then with an apologetic air raised his hat.

The other foot passenger was face to face with him now, a slim figure in black, with a sweet, serious face.

"Excuse me," said Mr. Carrington, "but can you tell me where this path leads?"

He was so polite and so evidently anxious to give no offense, and his face was such a certificate to his amiable character, that the girl stopped, too, and answered without hesitation.

"It leads to Keldale House."

"Keldale House?" he repeated, and

then the idea seemed to arouse associations. "By Jove!" he exclaimed. "Really? I'm an utter stranger here, but isn't that the place where the murder took place?"

Had Mr. Carrington been a really observant man, one would think he would have noticed the sudden change of expression in the girl's face—as if he had aroused painful thoughts. He did seem to look at her for an instant as he asked the question, but then turned his gaze toward the distant glimpse of the house.

"Yes," she murmured, and looked as though she wanted to pass on; but Mr. Carrington seemed so excited by his discovery that he never noticed this and still stood right in her path.

"How very interesting!" he murmured. "By Jove, how very interesting!" And then, with the air of passing on a still more interesting piece of news, he said suddenly, "I hear they have arrested Sir Malcolm Cromarty."

This time he kept his monocle full on her.

"Arrested him!" she cried. "What for?"

This question, put with the most palpable wonder, seemed to disconcert Mr. Carrington considerably. He even hesitated in a very unusual way for him.

"For—for the murder, of course."

Her eyes opened very wide.

"For Sir Reginald's murder? How ridiculous!"

Again Mr. Carrington seemed a little disconcerted.

"Er—why is it ridiculous?" he asked.

"Of course, I—I know nothing about the gentleman."

"Evidently," she agreed, with reproach in her eyes. "If Sir Malcolm really has been arrested, it can only have been for something quite silly. He couldn't commit a murder!"

The fact that this tribute to the baronet's innocence was not wholly devoid of a flavor of criticism seemed to strike

Mr. Carrington, for his eye twinkled for an instant.

"You are acquainted with him, then?" said he.

"I am staying at Keldale; in fact, I am a relative."

There was no doubt of her intention to rebuke the too garrulous gentleman by this information, and it succeeded completely. He passed at once to the extreme of apology.

"Oh! I beg your pardon!" he exclaimed. "I had no idea. Really, I hope you will accept my apologies, Miss—er—Cromarty."

"Miss Farmond," she corrected.

"Miss Farmond, I mean. It was frightfully tactless of me!"

He said it so nicely and looked so innocently guilty and so contrite, that her look lost its touch of indignation.

"I still can't understand what you mean about Sir Malcolm being arrested," she said. "How did you hear?"

"Oh, I was very likely misinformed. An old fellow at the hotel last night was saying so."

Her eye began to grow indignant again.

"What old fellow?"

"Red hair, shaky knees, bit of a stammer, answers to the name of Sandy, I believe."

"Old Sandy Donaldson!" she exclaimed. "That drunken old thing! He was simply talking nonsense as usual!"

"He seemed a little in liquor," he admitted, "but you see I am a mere stranger. I didn't realize what a loose authority I quoted. There is nothing in the report, I am certain. And this path leads only to Keldale House? Thank you very much. Good morning!"

How Mr. Carrington had obtained this erroneous information from a person whose back he had merely seen for a couple of minutes the night before, as the reprobate in question was being ejected from the King's Arms, he did not stop to explain. In fact at this point he showed no inclination to con-

tinue the conversation, but bowing very politely, continued his stroll.

But the effect of the conversation on him remained, and a very marked effect it appeared to be. He took no interest in the burn any longer, but paced slowly on, his eyes sometimes on the path and sometimes staring upward at the heavens. So far as his face revealed his sensations, they seemed to be compounded of surprise and perplexity. Several times he shook his head as though some very baffling point had cropped up in his thoughts, and once he murmured:

"I'm damned!"

When the path reached the vicinity of the house, he stopped and seemed once more to take some interest in his surroundings. For a moment it was clear that he was tempted to enter the plantations, and then he shook his head and turned back.

All the way home he remained immersed in thought and only recovered his nonchalant air as he entered the door of the King's Arms. He was the same easy-going, smiling young man of fashion as he passed the time of day with Miss Peterkin; but when he had shut the door of his private sitting room and dropped into an easy-chair over the fire, he again became so absorbed in thought that he had to be reminded that the hour of luncheon had passed.

Thought seemed to vanish during lunch, but when he had retired to his room again, it returned for another half hour. At the end of that time he apparently came to a decision, and jumping up briskly repaired to the manageress' room. And when Miss Peterkin was taken into his confidence, it appeared that the whole problem had merely concerned the question of taking either a shooting or a fishing for next season.

"I have been thinking," said he, "that my best plan will perhaps be to call upon Mr. Simon Rattar and see whether he knows of anything to let.

I gather that he is agent for several estates in the county. What do you advise?"

Miss Peterkin decidedly advised this course, so a few minutes later Mr. Carrington strolled off toward the lawyer's office.

CHAPTER XXII.

MR. CARRINGTON AND THE FISCAL.

The card handed to Mr. Simon Rattar contained merely the name: "Mr. F. T. Carrington" and the address: "Sports Club." Simon gazed at it cautiously and in silence for the better part of a minute, and when he glanced up at his head clerk to tell him that Mr. Carrington might be admitted, Mr. Ison was struck by the curious glint in his eye. It seemed to him to indicate that the fiscal was very wide awake at that moment; it struck him also that Mr. Rattar was not altogether surprised by the appearance of this visitor.

The agreeable stranger began by explaining very frankly that he thought of renting a place for next season where he could secure good fishing and a little shooting, and wondered if any of the properties Mr. Rattar was agent for would suit him. Simon grunted.

"What about Keldale House?" the sporting visitor suggested. "That's the place where the murder was committed, isn't it?" and then he laughed. "Your eye betrays you, Mr. Rattar!"

The lawyer seemed to start ever so slightly.

"Indeed?" he murmured.

"Look here," said Carrington with a candid smile, "let's put our cards on the table. You know my business?"

"Are you a detective?" asked the lawyer.

Mr. Carrington smiled and nodded.

"I am; or rather I prefer to call myself a private inquiry agent. People expect so much of a detective, don't they?"

Simon grunted, but made no other comment.

"In a case like this," continued Carrington, "when one is called in weeks too late and the household broom and scrubbing brush and garden rake have removed most of the possible clues, and witnesses' recollections have developed into picturesque legends, it is better to rouse as few expectations as possible, since it is probably impossible to find anything out. However, in the capacity of a mere inquiry agent I have come to pick up anything I can. May I smoke?"

He asked in his usual easy-going voice and with his usual candid smile, and then his eye was arrested by an inscription printed in capital letters, and hung in a handsome frame upon the office wall. It ran:

My Three Rules of Life.

1. I DO NOT SMOKE.
2. I LAY BY A THIRD OF MY INCOME.
3. I NEVER RIDE WHEN I CAN WALK.

Beneath these precepts appeared the lithographed signature of an eminent philanthropist, but it seemed reasonable to assume that they also formed the guiding maxims of Mr. Simon Rattar.

His visitor politely apologized for his question.

"I had not noticed this warning," said he.

"Smoke if you like. My clients sometimes do. I don't myself," said the lawyer.

His visitor thanked him, placed a cigarette in his amber holder, lit it, and let his eyes follow the smoke upward.

Mr. Rattar, on his part, seemed in his closest, most taciturn humor. His grunt and his nod had, in fact, seldom formed a greater proportion of his conversation. He made no further comment at all now, but waited in silence for his visitor to proceed.

"Well," resumed Carrington, "the simple facts of the case are these. I have been engaged through a certain firm of London lawyers, whose name I

am not permitted to mention, on behalf of a person whose name I don't know."

At this, a flash of keen interest showed for an instant in Simon's eye; and then it became as cold as ever again.

"Indeed?" said he.

"I am allowed to incur expense," continued the other, "up to a certain figure, which is so handsome that it gives me practically a free hand, so far as that is concerned. On the other hand, the arrangement entails certain difficulties which I dare say you, Mr. Rattar, as a lawyer, and especially as a procurator fiscal, accustomed to investigate cases of crime, will readily understand."

"Quite so, quite so," agreed Mr. Rattar, who seemed to be distinctly relaxing already from his guarded attitude.

"I arrived last night, put up at the King's Arms, where I gathered beforehand that the local gossip could best be collected, and in the course of the evening I collected enough to hang at least two people, and in the course of a few more evenings I shall probably have enough to hang half a dozen—if one can believe, say, a twentieth of what one hears. This morning I strolled out to Keldale House and had a look at it from the road, and I learned that it was a large mansion standing among trees. That's all I have been able to do so far."

"Nothing more than that?"

Mr. Carrington seemed to have a singularly short memory.

"I think that's a lot," said he. "And what is more, it seems to me the sum total of all I am likely to do without a little assistance from somebody in possession of rather more authentic facts than my friend, Miss Peterkin and her visitors."

"I quite understand," said the lawyer; and it was plain that his interest was now thoroughly enlisted.

"Well," continued Mr. Carrington, "I thought things over, and rightly or wrongly, I came to this decision. My

employer, whoever he is, has made it an absolute condition that his name is not to be known. His reasons may have been the best imaginable, but it obviously made it impossible for me to get any information out of him. For my own reasons I always prefer to make any inquiries in these cases in the guise of an unsuspected outsider, whenever it is possible; and it happens to be particularly possible in this case; since nobody here knows me from Adam. But I must get facts—as distinguished from the King's Arms' gossip, and how was I to get them without giving myself away? That was the problem, and I soon realized that it was insoluble. I saw I must confide in somebody, and so I came to the decision to confide in you."

Simon nodded and made a sound that seemed to indicate distinctly his opinion that Mr. Carrington had come to a sensible decision.

"You were the obvious person for several reasons," resumed Carrington. "In the first place, you could pretty safely be regarded as above suspicion yourself—if you will pardon my associating even the word suspicion with a procurator fiscal." He smiled his most agreeable smile and the fiscal allowed his features to relax sympathetically. "In the second place, you know more about the case than anybody else. And in the third place, I gather that you are—if I may say so—a gentleman of unusual discretion."

Again he smiled pleasantly, and again Mr. Rattar's features relaxed.

"Finally," added Carrington, "I thought it long odds that you were either actually my employer or acting for him, and therefore I should be giving nothing away by telling you my business. And when I mentioned Keldale House and the murder I saw that I was right!"

He laughed and Simon permitted himself to smile. Yet his answer was as cautious as ever.

"Well, Mr. Carrington?" said he.

"Well," said Carrington, "if you actually are my employer and we both lay our cards on the table, there's much to be gained, and—if I may say so—really nothing to be lost. I won't give you away if you won't give me."

The lawyer's nod seemed to imply emphatic assent, and the other went on:

"I'll keep you informed of everything I'm doing and anything I may happen to discover, and you can give me very valuable information as to what precisely is known already. Otherwise, of course, one could hardly exchange confidences so freely. Frankly, then, you engaged me to come down here?"

Even then Simon's caution seemed to linger for an instant. The next he answered briefly, but decidedly:

"Yes."

"Very well, now to business. I got a certain amount of literature on the case before I left town, and Miss Peterkin gave me some very valuable additions in the shape of the accounts in the local papers. Are there any facts known to you or the police beyond those I have read?"

Simon considered the question and then shook his head.

"None that I can think of, and I fear the local police will be able to add no information that can assist you."

"They are the usual not too intelligent country bobbies, I suppose?"

"Quite so," said Simon.

"In that case," asked Mr. Carrington, still in his easy voice, but with a quick turn of his eyeglass toward the lawyer, "why was no outside assistance called in at once?"

For a moment Simon Rattar's satisfaction with his visitor seemed to be diminished. He seemed, in fact, a little disconcerted.

"Quite satisfied with them," seemed to be the reading of his answer.

"Well," said Carrington, "no doubt you knew best, Mr. Rattar."

His eyes thoughtfully followed the

smoke of his cigarette upward for a moment, and then he said:

"That being so, my first step had better be to visit Keldale House and see whether it is still possible to find any small point the local professionals have overlooked."

Mr. Rattar seemed to disapprove of this.

"Nothing to discover," said he. "And they will know what you have come about."

"I think, Mr. Rattar, that, on the whole, my appearance provokes no great amount of suspicion."

"Your appearance, no," admitted Simon, "but——"

"Well, if I go to Keldale armed with a card of introduction from you, to make inquiry about the shootings, I think I can undertake to turn the conversation on to other matters without exciting suspicion."

"Conversation with whom?" inquired the lawyer skeptically.

"I had thought of Mr. Bisset, the butler."

"Oh——" began Mr. Rattar with a note of surprise.

"Yes," smiled Mr. Carrington, "I have picked up a little about the household. My friends of last night were exceedingly communicative—very gossipy indeed. I rather gather that omniscience is Mr. Bisset's foible, and that he is not averse to conversation."

The look in Simon's eye seemed to indicate that his respect for this easy-going, young man was increasing; though whether his liking for him was also increased thereby was not so manifest. His reply was again a mere grunt.

"Well, that can easily be arranged," said Carrington, "and it is obviously the first thing to do."

He blew a ring of smoke from his lips, skillfully sent a second ring in chase of it, and then, turning his monocle again on the lawyer, inquired:

"Whom do you think yourself murdered Sir Reginald Cromarty?"

CHAPTER XXIII.

SIMON'S VIEWS.

"Well," said Mr. Rattar deliberately, "I think myself that the actual evidence is very slight and extremely inclusive."

"You mean the direct evidence afforded by the unfastened window, position of the body, table said to have been overturned, and so forth?"

"Exactly. That evidence is slight, but so far as it goes, it seems to me to point to entry by the door and to the man having been in the house for some little time previously."

"Well?" said Carrington.

"So much for the direct evidence. I may be wrong, but that is my decided opinion. No bad characters are known to the police to have been in the county at that time, and there was no robbery."

"Apparently confirming the direct evidence?"

"Decidedly confirming it—or so it seems to me."

"Then you think there is something in the popular theory that the present baronet and Miss Farmond were the guilty parties?"

Simon was silent for a moment, but his face was unusually expressive.

"I fear it looks like it."

"An unpleasant conclusion for you to come to," observed Mr. Carrington. "You are the family lawyer, I understand."

"Very unpleasant," Mr. Rattar agreed. "But of course, there is no absolute proof."

"Naturally; or they'd have been arrested by now. What sort of a fellow is Sir Malcolm?"

"My own experience of him," said the lawyer dryly, "is chiefly confined to his visits to my office to borrow money."

"Indeed?" said Carrington with interest. "That sort of fellow, is he? He writes, I understand."

Simon nodded.

"Any other known vices?"

"I know little about his vices except that they cost him considerably more than he could possibly have paid, had it not been for Sir Reginald's death."

"So the motive is plain enough. Any evidence against him?"

Simon pursed his lips and became exceedingly grave.

"When questioned next morning by the superintendent of police and myself, he led us to understand that he had retired to bed early and was in no position to hear or notice anything. I have since found that he was in the habit of sitting up late."

"In the habit," repeated Carrington quickly. "But you don't suggest he sat up that night in particular?"

"Undoubtedly he sat up that night."

"But merely as he always did?"

"He might have been waiting for his chance on the previous nights."

Carrington smoked thoughtfully for a moment and then asked:

"But there is no evidence that he left his room or was heard moving about that night, is there?"

"There is not yet any positive evidence. But he was obviously in a position to do so."

"Was his room near or over the library?"

"N-no," said the fiscal, and there seemed to be a hint of reluctance in his voice.

Carrington glanced at him quickly and then gazed up at the ceiling.

"What sort of a girl is Miss Farmond?" he inquired next.

"She is the illegitimate daughter of a brother of the late Sir Reginald's."

Carrington nodded.

"So I gathered from the local gossips. But that fact is hardly against her, is it?"

"Why not?"

Carrington looked a little surprised.

"Girls don't generally murder their uncles for choice in my own experience;

especially if they are also their benefactors."

"This was hardly the usual relationship," said the lawyer with a touch of significance.

"Do you suggest that the irregularity is apt to breed crime?"

Simon's grunt seemed to signify considerable doubt as to the morals of the type of relative.

"But what sort of girl is she otherwise?"

"I should call Miss Farmond the insinuating type. A young man like yourself would probably find her very attractive—at first, anyhow."

Mr. Carrington seemed to ponder for a moment on this suggestive description of Miss Farmond's allurements. And then he asked:

"Is it the case that she is engaged to Sir Malcolm?"

"Certainly."

"You are sure?"

Something in his voice seemed to make the lawyer reflect.

"Is it called in question?" he asked.

Carrington shook his head.

"By nobody who has spoken to me on the subject. But I understand that it has not yet been announced."

"No," said Simon, "it was a secret engagement; and marriage would have been impossible while Sir Reginald lived."

"So there we get the motive on her part. And you yourself, Mr. Rattar, *know* both these young people, and you believe that this accusation against them is well-founded?"

"I believe, Mr. Carrington, that there is no proof and probably never will be any; but all the evidence, positive and negative, together with the question of motive, points to nobody else. What alternative is possible?"

"That is the difficulty, so far," agreed Carrington, but his thoughts at the moment seemed to be following his smoke rings up toward the ceiling. For a few

moments he was silent, and then he asked:

"What other people benefited by the will and to what extent?"

The lawyer went to his safe, brought out the will, and read through the legacies to the servants, mentioning that the chauffeur and gardener were excluded by circumstances from suspicion.

"That leaves Mr. Bisset," observed Carrington. "Well, I shall be seeing him to-morrow. Any other legatees who might conceivably have committed the crime?"

Simon looked serious and spoke with a little reluctance that he seemed to make no effort to conceal.

"There is a relative of the family, a Mr. Cromarty of Stanesland, who certainly benefited considerably by the will and who certainly lives in the neighborhood—if one once admitted the possibility of the crime being committed by some one outside the house. And I admit that it is a possibility."

"Ah!" said Carrington. "I heard about him last night, but so far suspicion certainly hasn't fastened on him. What sort of a fellow is he?"

"He has lived the greater part of his life in the wilder parts of America—rather what one might call a rough-and-ready customer."

"It was apparent that Mr. Carrington, for all his easy-going air, was extremely interested.

"This is quite interesting!" he murmured. "To what extent did he benefit by the will?"

"Twelve hundred pounds."

"Twelve hundred pounds!" Carrington repeated the words with an odd intonation and stared very hard at the lawyer. There was no doubt that his interest was highly excited now, and yet it seemed to be rather a different quality of interest this time.

"A considerable sum," said Simon.

"That is the only point about it which strikes you?"

Simon was manifestly puzzled.

"What else?" he inquired.

"No coincidence occurs to you?"

The lawyer's puzzled look remained, and the next instant Carrington broke into a hearty laugh.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Rattar!" he cried. "What an owl I am! I have just been dealing lately with a case where that sum of money was involved, and for the moment I mixed the two up together!" He laughed again, and then resuming his businesslike air, asked, "Now, what else about this Mr. Cromarty? You say he is a relative. Near or distant?"

"Oh, quite distant. Another branch altogether."

"Younger branch, I presume."

"Poorer but not younger. He is said to be the head of the family."

"Really!" exclaimed Mr. Carrington, and this information seemed to have set him thinking again. "He is the head of the family, and I hear he took up the case with some energy."

Simon's grunt seemed to be critical.

"He got in our way," he said.

"Got in your way, did he?"

Carrington was silent for a few moments, and then said:

"Well, I am afraid I have taken up a great deal of your time. May I have a line of introduction to Mr. Bisset before I go?"

While the line was being written he walked over to the fire and cleared the stump of his last cigarette out of the holder. This operation was very deliberately performed, and through it his eyes seemed scarcely to note what his hands were doing.

He put the note in his pocket, shook hands, and then, just as he was going, he said:

"I want to understand the lie of the land as exactly as possible. Your own attitude so far has been, I take it—no proof, therefore no arrest; but a

nasty family scandal left festering, so you decided to call me in. Now, I want to know this: Is there anybody else in the neighborhood who knows that I have been sent for?"

Mr. Rattar replied with even more than his usual deliberation, and his reply consisted of another question.

"You say that your employer made a particular point of having his identity concealed?"

"Yes, a particular point."

"Doesn't that answer your question, Mr. Carrington?"

"No," said Carrington, "not in the least. I am asking now whether there is any other employer in this neighborhood besides yourself. And I may say that I ask for the very good reason that it might be awkward for me if there were, and I didn't know him, while if I did know him, I could consult with him if it happened to be advisable. Is there any one?"

"No," replied Simon, after a pause that was emphatic in its effect.

"That's all right, then," said Mr. Carrington with his brightest smile. "Good afternoon, Mr. Rattar!"

The smile faded from his ingenuous face the moment the door had closed behind him, and it was a very thoughtful Mr. Carrington who slowly went downstairs and strolled along the pavement. If his morning's interview had puzzled him, his afternoon's interview seemed to have baffled him completely. He even forgot to relapse into the thoughtless young sportsman when he entered the hotel, and his friend, the manageress, after eying him with great surprise, cried archly:

"A penny for your thoughts, Mr. Carrington! About shooting or fishing, I'm sure!"

Mr. Carrington recovered his pleasant spirits instantly.

"Quite right," said he. "I was thinking about fishing—in very deep waters."

Sleeping *and* Dreaming

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

Dr. Whitney is always glad to answer all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health, but she cannot undertake to answer letters which fail to inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply, or to letters inclosing Canadian stamps. Every week she receives many letters of this sort, in spite of the notice always printed at the end of this department. Sometimes, even, the post office sends notification that letters are being held for her, which careless writers have posted with no stamp. If you have failed to receive a reply to your letter, you may know that it is for one of these three reasons.—EDITORS.

SLEEP is as necessary to life as food, yet we know very little of its physiology. During sleep, the entire body should be in a state of complete relaxation, very much like the condition which is brought about by profound anaesthesia. Unhappily, few adults enjoy this delightful state of somnolence. Children, until they have acquired bad habits, do; most animals do.

In sleep, breathing is distinctly modified and circulation is reduced. The pulse is less rapid, as the heart beats more slowly and there is lowered arterial pressure. Therefore, there is less blood carried to the surface of the body. This accounts for the fact that in sleep the skin cools off very rapidly, and the body chills. Many persons who in restless sleep throw off the bed covering, take cold in this manner and are unaware of the cause.

An interesting and important fact in connection with sleep is that the carbon-dioxide constituent is decreased, and the absorption of oxygen is increased. We all know that oxygen spells life. The need for free circulation of pure air in the sleeping room is, therefore, even greater than is generally supposed. Because of the change in the respiratory process, the chest actually increases in size during sleep. This accounts for the fact that

many persons with lung troubles and nervous disorders suffer from night sweats.

The need for sleep varies tremendously, within physiological limits, in different individuals and at different ages. Most adults require from eight to ten hours' sleep. There are temperamental differences, many of which are innate, but others are, unhappily, acquired. For instance, many turn night into day, cultivate the habit of late hours, and so on.

Children, as every one knows, require more sleep than adults, but do not always get it. Some parents are extremely lax in this respect, permitting their little ones to sit up until they themselves retire. Healthy babies sleep most of the time. At four years, fourteen hours of sleep are imperatively necessary; at fourteen years, ten hours; at seventeen years, nine and one-half hours. During adult life, seven or eight hours are required by the body.

Old persons rarely enjoy continuous sleep, but they require very little, as their sleeping is accomplished in a series of naps. They nap and doze, and doze and nap. This may be explained by the fact that *growth proceeds in sleep*. From birth to adolescence; refreshing sleep is therefore abundantly required; while during the height of maturity, profitable sleep is just as nec-

essary, for it is during sleep that the work of waste and repair goes on. In old age, however, life's work is done. Neither growth nor tissue-rebuilding goes on, but instead, a process of gradual retrogression. The aged, therefore, need but nap and doze, a period of prolonged sleep being not physiologically necessary.

Because it is a function of a highly complex organism, sleep is really not a simple process. Mother Nature requires darkness, quiet, and peace for her slumbers. Human nature requires the same. A dark room, quiet, plenty of fresh air, and early hours are desirable. The first few hours of sleep are the most profound; it is during these that nature works at her best to restore and to renew the tissues. The first few hours of sleep are the regenerative hours, and should be the early hours of the night, for after midnight the vital forces are at their lowest, and the body is in a state almost motionless. In cases of grave illness, the hours from midnight until three in the morning are usually those during which life ebbs out.

Therefore, when profitable, rejuvenating sleep is really sought, "early to bed and early to rise" is a good old-fashioned maxim to observe. The condition of the mind, as well as of the stomach, has a powerful influence upon sleep. Active emotions, worries, intense thought, preclude it.

Many take their business to bed with them. The next day's work is mapped out after they have retired, these quiet hours being deliberately chosen for this purpose, as they are free from all interruption. This is a great mistake, as it means burning up so much more nervous force. Furthermore, it does not invite complete unconsciousness, because when sleep does come, the unconscious is oftentimes highly active in dreams. During sleep, consciousness is submerged. It is not the brain that sleeps; it is consciousness that relaxes.

In the case of these business people, they have formed a bad habit and it has become a part of them. They would do better work and enjoy better health if they were to free their minds from all mental activity during the early hours of the night. In the early hours of the morning, with renewed, refreshed brain cells, they could then clearly plan out the work of the day.

In sleep, as in every other performance of the body, habit is all powerful, both for good and bad. Parents should, therefore, inculcate in their children good habits of sleep. Children should not be permitted to study up to the sleeping hour, nor to read exciting stories in the evening.

The condition of the bed and its covering are important factors toward inviting peaceful slumber. A comfortable bed is more necessary than fashionable clothing. A bed which induces a pleasurable relaxation of the body is an essential, as is also clean bedding. Sheets and pillow cases should be changed at least twice a week. Mattresses and pillows should be thoroughly aired every day. The character of night clothes depends upon individual requirements, but underwear should never be worn during sleep. As for covering, it should be light in weight, but warm.

Many persons are hereditarily poor sleepers and the slightest disturbance tends to awaken them. Every trivial sound or circumstance—a light, an odor, a jolt, even the discontinuance of an accustomed noise or light, arouses them. Hunger, overeating, indigestion, constipation, intestinal worms, lithæmia, tea, coffee, tobacco, alcohol, psychic disturbances, are among the many things that cause wakefulness in otherwise "healthy" persons.

It is a peculiar fact that many persons who suffer from wakefulness are vain in this respect, believing them-

selves to be in some way different from others. In the last analysis, they must pay for this difference in one way or another. However, wakefulness is a cultivated habit; it is not normal; it grows upon the individual. Those who have their health, long life, and good looks at heart, should cultivate reposeful slumbers. Perhaps the most common disorder of sleep is *insomnia*, which is always a symptom of some underlying condition, for practically every deviation from health is accompanied by some disturbance of sleep. Many persons who believe themselves victims of insomnia sleep a great deal more than they think they do. Sleep is as necessary to life as food and air, and much loss of sleep results in a haggard, weary appearance, and a decided lessening of the muscular and mental forces. Indeed, continuous loss of sleep causes loss in weight which may equal that due to deprivation of food. Appetite, digestion, energy, and courage are diminished.

There is no doubt that many cases of insomnia are willfully stimulated. The very things that precipitate it are deliberately cultivated, such as eating and drinking before retiring; reading late into the night to induce sleep; meditating on one's affairs and worries; a stuffy bedroom. During sleep the brain is in a condition of anæmia. All the indulgences mentioned above produce precisely the opposite effect upon the brain. The flow of blood to this organ is increased, and the blood itself is full of carbon dioxide and other poisonous products which act as irritants to the brain cells.

The treatment of insomnia, therefore, must take into account a great many factors; the hereditary tendencies of the individual, his modes of living, habits of sleeping, physical condition, as well as his general hygiene, such as baths, proper diet, exercise, and so on.

Insomnia, except in grave cases of ill-

ness, may be considered a habit, and one that can be overcome, *not with drugs*, but through hygienic means. A cool, clean couch in a well-ventilated, cool, dark room are imperative necessities. A quiet, warm bath at bedtime, without friction, invites sleep. Cold cloths on the brows and eyes are often helpful. Many persons cannot sleep on an empty stomach, are awakened by hunger, and remain awake for hours. In such cases, it is sensible to take a glass of hot milk, hot broth, or even hot water on retiring. Stimulants are not advisable. Those who awaken at two in the morning should have at the bedside a soothing drink and some crackers. Many cases of insomnia yield only to complete change of air and scene. Whenever possible, this should be resorted to in preference to drug-taking, for any drug that produces sleep is a dangerous remedy.

Not so prominent as insomnia is that condition wherein is experienced an irresistible desire to sleep. This morbid condition may last for a few minutes or several hours. Some cases are regarded by neurologists as having profound neurotic stigmata, yet simple eye troubles are often the starting point and with appropriate lenses the trouble corrects itself. Sleep palsies are very common. There is a numbness of certain parts of the body. A hand or limb "goes to sleep." In some people, this condition occurs daily, for months and years. Upon awakening in the morning, for example, a loss of power may be noted, or sensations of tingling and prickling, cramps and pain occur.

This benumbed state usually yields to cold salt-water rubbings. In all these cases, the condition arises from a state of auto-intoxication or local anæmia. The excessive use of tobacco or alcohol should be given up, the blood improved, and the diet regulated.

What are dreams? Contrary to popular belief, *everybody dreams*. Sleep may

be so profound that the dream rarely penetrates into the outer consciousness, and so we occasionally hear some one state that he never dreams. Dreams, however simple, fragmentary, or ridiculous, however absurd, fantastic, or strange, are really very complex, and are invariably based upon the experiences of the dreamer. They are real, not phantoms of the imagination. In order to understand the present-day theories regarding dreams, we must assume that we lead two lives, the inner, which is our true self, and the outer, by which we are known and recognized. Every one will admit that he cultivates thoughts, has wishes, hopes, and desires, of which those nearest and dearest to him have no knowledge. From our earliest childhood we are taught to suppress many things to which we would fain give expression. The inner self is, therefore, completely "snowed under" by thousands of repressing forces that have, in the course of years, rolled over the individual. We are not even aware of our true selves. This accounts for the fact that when sudden and unexpected circumstances take us completely off our guard, we act in ways amazing to ourselves. We attach no importance to dreams, and in nowise connect our conscious, waking self with them. The average person is unwilling to admit the importance of dreams, yet the psycho-analyst states that we must emphasize the term "important," since no dream ever deals with trifles, but only with subjects of great, personal interest to the dreamer.

Human motives cannot be judged by a person's conduct or speech, for we usually conceal our feelings. Culture and breeding demand it. The conventionalities of society make it imperative that we assume a certain bearing before the world; that our desires, if they conflict with convention, be suppressed; and that we conform to the well-recognized rules of human intercourse.

Dreams, then, are the logical outcome of unconscious mental processes, and the popular belief that they are built up by an idle brain, or that they are figments of the imagination is incorrect. We must accustom ourselves to regard dreams as of the utmost usefulness in the production of profitable sleep. The unconscious contains nothing that has not been learned, thought, or experienced. It is the sum total of all that we have lived from our earliest childhood. Just as man, as he exists to-day, is the product of his remotest ancestors, plus the multitudinous stages of slow evolution through which he has passed, so his unconscious life represents all the things he has done, thought, and wished.

The questions will naturally arise: Wherefore do we dream? Of what service are dreams? We are told that dreaming is one of the functions of the mind, for the consummation of which sleep is necessary. As previously stated, consciousness relaxes during sleep. Consciousness is the censor which closes the door upon all repressed and suppressed thought. Many persons complain of "dream-ridden" sleep. This is the beginning of some types of *functional* insomnia. Troubled sleep, caused by unpleasant dreams, keeps the individual wakeful. Everybody dreams. The dream mechanism is too complex to dwell upon here, but its purpose is to insure tranquil sleep. For this purpose, it is essential that dreaming be symbolic, in order that it may not disturb the sleeper, otherwise the myriads of repressed thoughts and wishes experienced throughout life obtrude themselves into our consciousness to such a degree that *quiet sleep* becomes impossible.

Two factors are essential to quiet sleep: relaxation and disinterest. Dreams, when they do not escape, furnish both. When, by their force, or

through the incompetence of the censor to maintain the balance, they impinge upon consciousness, insomnia or wakefulness results. The function of dreams is to protect sleep, to render it undisturbed. Dreams are the *guardians of sleep*. They assume startling significance and great value in the light

shed upon them by the newer psychology.

As sleep is as necessary to life as fresh air and food, it behooves us all to give to the subject more thought, and to regulate hours of sleep in accordance with the more recent and original ideas on health and beauty.

WHAT READERS ASK

DOROTHY S.—I have written so much on the subject of puffs or bags under the eyes! Before trying out any local treatment, you must first be sure that the eyes themselves are not at fault. For instance, do you use them continuously for near work? If so, you may require glasses. The muscles of the eyes, especially the circular bundle of fibers that constitutes the upper and lower eyelid, may be greatly relaxed. Attend to your eyes then. Meanwhile, tone up the flabby structures with ice. Take a smooth piece, wrapped about with clean cotton, and iron the eyelids and puffs for five minutes, or until the skin is very red, which means that you have drawn the blood to the surface; then apply cold applications of the following lotion: Boracic acid, 1 dram; alcohol, 1 ounce; rose water, 2 ounces. Moisten cotton with lotion, which you have kept on ice, and apply to the "puffs" for ten or fifteen minutes, two or three times each day. If your skin is thin and soft, you should make this treatment part of your daily toilet.

Mrs. W.—I cannot publish the treatment for bust reduction here, as it takes too much space, but I shall be happy to send you information on receipt of a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

FLORENCE B.—You can help to restore the firmness and contour of your breasts by bathing them daily with cold salt water. Use a sponge, dousing on iced water repeatedly for ten minutes. Then, practice breathing exercises to develop the muscles to which the breasts are attached. You see, if the musculature of the chest is faulty, you cannot hope for a firm bust; it *will* sag. Now another thing, you must wear a brassiere to support the bust. Unless this is done, the weight of these organs will be sufficient in themselves to cause sagging; therefore never

permit yourself to go without a brassiere, even during sleep. In fact, I urge all women, especially those who have had children, to wear this little garment, day and night.

Mrs. L. K. W.—All I can recommend is a wax by means of which superfluous hairs are pulled out. I would not employ this on hairs growing from moles, but would consult a skin specialist for treatment with the electric needle. No, electrolysis is not uniformly successful in the removal of superfluous hair. In case of moles, it is quite a different matter as the mole is thereby also removed. Let me send you data on the wax treatment.

Mrs. FLOYD W.—With a little care and forethought you can vastly improve the color and texture of your skin. Directions for softening and perfuming the bath will be mailed to you upon proper application.

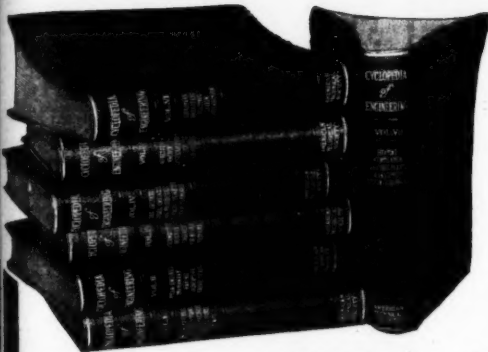
CONSTANT SUBSCRIBER.—It is always a great pleasure to hear that this department proves so satisfactory to my readers.

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HENRY K.—Yes, typhoid fever can be transmitted through milk which has been diluted with polluted water, and by receptacles which have been washed in polluted water, as well as by the unclean hands of milkers who may be "typhoid carriers." Typhoid fever is an autumnal disease, and attacks, by preference, young folk.

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"I said, 'Billy, I'm going to give you something worth more than a loan—some good advice—and if you'll follow it I'll let you have the hundred, too.

You don't want to work for \$15 a week all your life, do you?' Of course he didn't. 'Well,' I said, 'there's a way to climb out of your job to something better. Take up a course with the International Correspondence Schools in the work you want to advance in, and put in some of your evenings getting special training. The Schools will do wonders for you—I know, we've got several I. C. S. boys right here in the bank.'

"That very night Billy wrote to Scranton and a few days later he had started studying at home. Why, in a few months he had doubled his salary! Next thing I knew he was put in charge of his department, and two months ago they made him Manager. And he's making real money. Owns his own home, has quite a little property beside, and he's a regular at that window every month. It just shows what a man can do in a little spare time."

Employers are begging for men with ambition, men who really want to get ahead in the world and are willing to prove it by training themselves in spare time to do some one thing well.

Prove that **you** are that kind of a man! The International Correspondence Schools are ready and anxious to help you prepare for something better if you'll simply give them the chance. More than two million men and women in the last 28 years have taken the I. C. S. route to more money. Over 100,000 others are getting ready in the same way right now.

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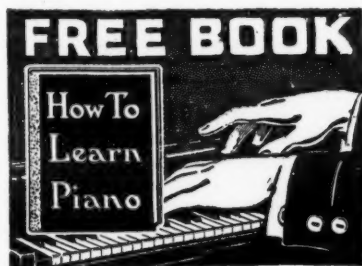
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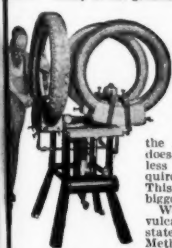


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John Bauguss was 11 years old when brought to the McLain Sanitarium. Although deformity was extreme, result shown by photos was accomplished in 8 months. No Plaster Paris casts were used. Father writes:

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For further details write Mr. Bauguss or the Sanitarium.

For Crippled Children

The McLain Sanitarium is a thoroughly equipped private institution devoted exclusively to the treatment of Club Feet, Infantile Paralysis, Spinal Disease and Deformities, Wry Neck, Hip Disease, Diseases of the joints, especially as found in children and young adults. Our book, "Deformities and Paralysis" also "Book of References" sent free.

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C330



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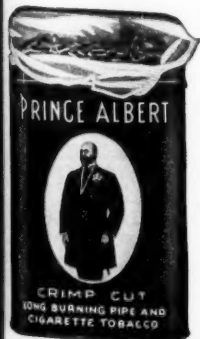
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Statement of the Ownership, Management, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of SMITH'S MAGAZINE published monthly, at New York, N. Y. for October 1, 1919:

State of New York, County of New York, (ss.)

Before me, a Notary Public, in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared George C. Smith, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is Treasurer of Street & Smith Corporation, publishers of SMITH'S MAGAZINE, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Public Laws and Regulations, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: *Publishers*, Street & Smith Corporation, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; *editor*, Charles A. MacLenn, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; *managing editors*, Street & Smith Corporation, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; *business managers*, Street & Smith Corporation, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

2. That the owners are: Street & Smith Corporation, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y., a corporation composed of Ormond G. Smith, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; George C. Smith, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; Annie C. Smith, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; George C. Smith, Jr., 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; Cora A. Gould, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.; Ormond V. Gould, 89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

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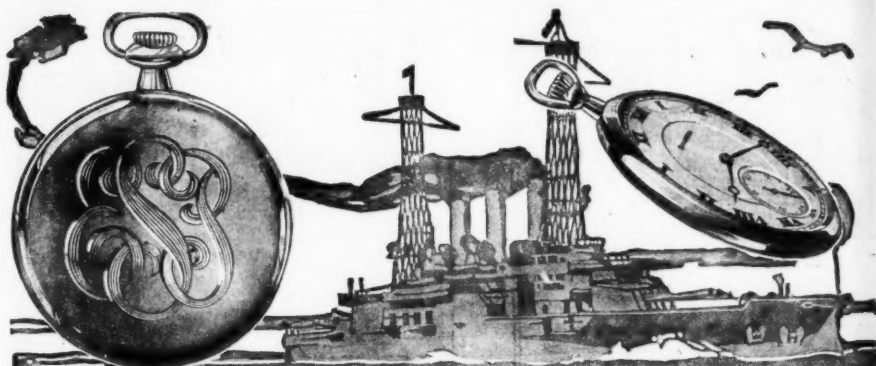
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